NEW SERIAL JUST STARTED.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 379. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 4TH, 1896. [ONE PENNY.

BE SURE TO KEEP

IT WELL.

WONDERFUL BARGAINS!

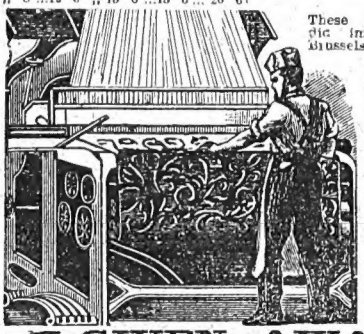
IMMENSE REDUCTION IN PRICES OF OUR WORLD-RENOWNED

BRUSSELETTE CARPETS.

ADMITTEDLY THE CHEAPEST IN THE WORLD Seamless, Woven, and Reversible, Rich Turkey Patterns and Colourings, Superior Quality, with Handsome Border to match, a Marvel of Excellence and Beauty.

SIZES AND PRICES.

	ft. in.		ft. in.	Sale Price. s. d.	Former Price. s. d.
No. 1	9 0	by	6 0	5 6	9 0
„ 2	9 0	„	7 6	7 0	11 6
„ 3	9 0	„	8 6	11 6	11 6
„ 4	10 6	„	7 6	8 9	13 9
„ 5	10 6	„	9 0	10 0	15 0
„ 6	12 0	„	9 0	11 6	18 0
„ 7	10 6	„	10 6	12 0	18 6
„ 8	12 0	„	10 6	13 6	20 6
No. 9	15 0	by	9 0	14 3	22 6
„ 10	13 6	„	10 6	15 3	24 0
„ 11	12 0	„	12 0	15 3	24 0
„ 12	13 6	„	12 0	17 0	27 0
„ 13	15 0	„	12 0	19 0	32 6
„ 14	18 0	„	12 0	22 9	36 6
„ 15	21 0	„	12 0	26 0	42 0



These Carpets are splendid imitations of Real Brussels Carpets, the designs having been carefully copied from the originals, both as regards colourings and patterns, so that when in use it is almost impossible, except by close scrutiny, to detect the difference. They have gained a world-wide reputation for magnificence, cheapness, and utility, having no equal. All designs are registered and deservedly considered works of art.

GIVEN AWAY.

As an advertisement for the introduction of these goods to all readers of *Short Stories*, we have decided to give away to every purchaser of the above goods, enclosing cutting from this advertisement a very handsomely woven Hearthrug, 6ft. long and 3it. wide, to match carpets in colours etc.

Thousands of Repeat Orders and Unsolicited Testimonials have been received from our Customers.

Hurst Wood, near Maidstone.
Mrs. Thatcher writes: "Sir, please to send me two Carpets, etc. I had two from you three years ago, and they have given great satisfaction."

Police Station, Larkhill, Lanarkshire, N.B.
Mr. L. Annand writes: "Would you please forward me another Brusselette Square, same as one received on Friday last. I must say it far exceeds my expectations. I am simply delighted with it."

All goods despatched same day as order received. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR MONEY RETURNED. Cheques and Postal Orders to be made payable to J. HARGREAVES, *Sec.*, and crossed "Union Bank." Established upwards of Twenty-five Years.

THE BRITISH CARPET WEAVING CO.,
31, OLD STREET, LONDON, E.C.

PAY YOU WELL.

THIS ADVERTISEMENT.

MASON'S

EXTRACT OF HERBS

For the Immediate Production of

BOTANIC BEER.

A Nine-gallon Cask of Alcoholic Beer from a Brewery will cost you 10/6, but Eight Gallons of Beer made from

Mason's

EXTRACT of HERBS

Can be obtained for 6d., plus a pound or two of Sugar and a little Yeast.

THE FINEST BEVERAGE IN THE WORLD.

Inventors and Manufacturers:

Newball & Mason,

HYSON GREEN WORKS,

Nottingham.

If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood, send 9 stamps for sample bottle; or samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs, post free for 15 stamps.

PALATABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR COD LIVER OIL.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM.

(REALLY GENUINE.)

In Patent Air-tight Tins, ½lb., 1s. 4d.; 1lb., 2s. 4d.; 2lb., 4s., including Tin and Postage.

MRS. CONYERS, KILKHAMPTON, STRATTON, N. DEVON

Digitized by Google

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,
Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,
Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

ANNUAL SALE SIX MILLION BOXES.

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

THE

REV. C. HAVERGAL

(Nephew of the late Miss Frances Ridley Havergal)

Writes from 14, Alroy Road, Ansfield, Liverpool: "I can thoroughly endorse the statement of 'A CLERGYMAN,' whose testimony to the efficacy of your WIND PILLS for affections of the STOMACH, BOWELS, and LIVER, appears in *The News*. I shall be happy to recommend your Pills as I have opportunity. By all means publish my communication."

All sufferers from **INDIGESTION, LIVER COMPLAINTS, WIND ON THE STOMACH, COSTIVENESS, SICK HEADACHE, NERVOUS DEBILITY, PALPITATION OF THE HEART, BILIOUSNESS,** etc., should avail themselves of this most excellent medicine.

☞ The **WIND PILLS** being Purely Vegetable, Tasteless and Mild, and Tonic in their action, may be taken with perfect safety by the most delicate of either sex.

Of all Vendors, at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. Post Free for price, from

PAGE WOODCOCK, Lincoln.

TOOTH-ACHE

CURED INSTANTLY BY

BUNTER'S NERVINE

Prevents Decay. Saves Extraction. Sleepless Nights Prevented. Neuralgic Headache and all Nerve Pains Removed by BUNTER'S NERVINE. All Chemists, 1s. 1½d.

RUBBER STAMPS

FREE BY POST.

AGENTS WANTED.

Liberal commissions.

Your MONOGRAM, 2 letters, 1/2; 3 letters or Name in full, 1/8, including Box, Pad, and Ink for Paper or Indelible Marking Ink for Linen. All kinds of stamps. Illustrated Lists free.

S. S. IRETON & CO., Ltd., 92, Gracechurch St., London, E.C.

"JUNO" CYCLES

Are the very Best.

JUNO Safeties. Roadsters. 28lb.; Racers. 22lb. JUNO Lady's Safety a Specialite.

Send at once for JUNO Catalogue, sent post free to any part of the world, interesting and valuable to all. METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO., LTD., 75 and 76, Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C.

N.B.—Every JUNO Guaranteed. MENTION PAPER.

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

THIN BUSTS

Quickly transformed and a good figure permanently obtained by a perfectly harmless, simple, and inexpensive self-treatment. Success guaranteed. For particulars, free, send stamped envelope in confidence to "Madame E. J.," Oriental Toilet Co., 37, Strand, London.

RED NOSES

Caused by INDIGESTION, etc. All who suffer from this disfiguring complaint should write for DR. HOWELL'S RENOWNED REMEDY, 22, Glasshouse Street, London, W., who guarantees a cure in a few days. 2/9 a box.

RED NOSES

Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.

BLUSHING

Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home-cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

DOUGLAS, HUNGERFORD, AND WILLIAMS.

PROFITS PAID DURING 1895.

Jan. 2, £8 per cent, Feb. 1, £6, Mar. 1, £5, April 1, £8, May 1, £7, June 2, £10, July 1, £9, Aug. 1, £9, Sept. 2, £8, Oct. 1, £8, Nov. 1, £7, Dec. 2, £7.

Total for 12 months £92 per cent., an average of nearly £8 PER CENT. PER MONTH.

PROFITS PAID DURING 1896.

Jan. 2 ... £6 per cent. | Feb. 1 ... £7 per cent.
March 2 ... ... £6 per cent.

OUR NEW ILLUSTRATED MANUAL mailed free upon request, showing how these profits may be made WITHOUT SPECULATION. Cheques for profits mailed promptly 1st of each month, and for withdrawals of capital on 2nd and 16th of each month. Trial investments of £5 and upwards may be made.

We have not a dissatisfied Client.

DOUGLAS, HUNGERFORD, & WILLIAMS, 5, Copthall Avenue, London, E.C., and 11, Place de la Bourse, Paris.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady who has permanently destroyed Superfluous Hairs on herself, will be happy to forward free, to all similarly afflicted, full particulars of a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment. Send stamped addressed envelope in confidence to Mrs. "T. D.," 57 Strand, London.

HAIR DESTROYED

permanently and absolutely by an entirely new and harmless self-treatment, total destruction guaranteed. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. Prof. F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

S.S. S.S.
PEARSON'S
£100
COUPON.
No. 14
April 4, 1896.
S.S. S.S.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope addressed to Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 4, DUKE STREET, VILLIERS STREET, LONDON, W.

ARE YOU LITTLE?

If so, wear the "*AD*" Invisible Elevators (Regd.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means; detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamped envelope for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B 5 Dept.), 87, Strand, London.

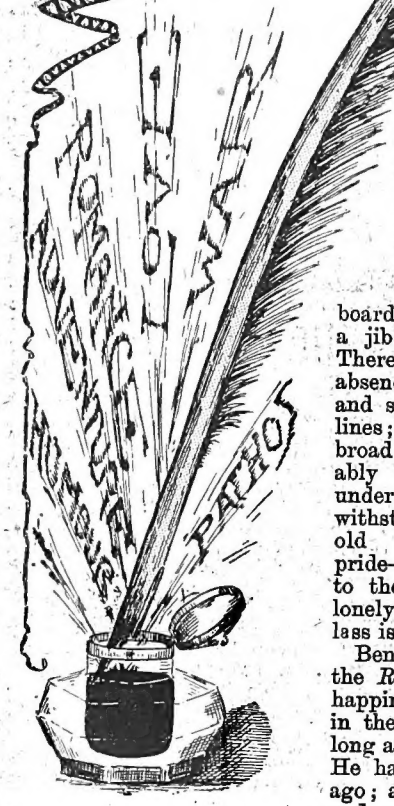
Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED by C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 379.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending April 4th, 1896.



Ben Boardman's Boat.

THE *Rescue* was an unwieldy, centre-board craft carrying only a jib and a mainsail. There was a noticeable absence of the graceful and symmetrical in her lines; she was of a broad beam, and remarkably steady and slow under canvas. Yet, notwithstanding, she was old Ben Boardman's pride—something more to the aged, sea-worn, lonely man, than many a lass is to her lover.

Ben Boardman loved the *Rescue*; his whole happiness was centred in the boat, that is the long and the short of it. He had built her years ago; and he had patched and repatched her exceedingly tub-like sides with all the loving care of a creator restoring his own handiwork.

The tide was low, one afternoon in July, and the *Rescue* lay—unsupported by a single chock—high and dry, careening to starboard, upon the Worthing beach-shingle. And her proprietor leant against a weather-beaten capstan—ruminating.

Such men as Ben will pass nearly a whole day in this manner, in the profoundest meditation, thinking of days that have gone, and of deeds that have been long since forgotten save by themselves.

Many a quid of rum-soaked tobacco did the old man turn over between his toothless gums, ere the tide came in. But at the approach of the water, his thoughts winged themselves back to his craft in the background of the peaceful picture of which he himself formed the quaint centre-piece.

"There'll be a bit o' a westerly breeze 'fore long," he muttered to himself. Then, as though the *Rescue* was imbued with life, and could hear him, he added in a louder tone: "Old gal, may-be we'll earn a trifle i' the evening."

The water was smooth as a mill-pond, and the heat rose from the surface in a shimmering haze. The tide drew nearer and nearer, creating scarce a ripple. A sixty-ton yawl lay at anchor some three miles to seaward; she was trim and graceful, heavily sparred, and contrasted strangely with the old tub which Ben Boardman loved so well.

Suddenly a boat put off from the yawl, manned by one of the yachtsmen, a lady and gentleman being seated in the stern.

Ben, ever mindful of the opportunity of receiving a gratuity, made his way down the beach, crossed the thin strip of level sands, and stood knee-deep in the water, in readiness to run the boat well ashore, so that the dainty feet of the lady might alight upon a comparatively dry spot.

He scanned the yawl, as he stood there—she had only arrived at her anchorage that morning—and his keen and practised eye took in and fully appreciated the beauty of her lines. But not for a fleet of such vessels would the old man have exchanged his *Rescue*, the work of his own hands.

Meanwhile, the boat—urged through the smooth waters by the muscular arms of the yachtsman—shot shorewards at a rapid rate.

In the course of a not uneventful life, Ben Boardman had visited many places, and had seen many beautiful women of almost all nationalities, but never had his eyes rested upon a more lovely face than that of the fair occupant of the boat's stern.

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

Beatrice Douglas—for such was her name—was, indeed, beautiful. Her brilliant blue eyes shone like stars; her hair—of a hue betwixt black and brown—waved in graceful carelessness above her smooth, white forehead, above her little, shell-pink ears, and protruded in delicious, natural curls from beneath her red, stocking-shaped cap. She had, perhaps, too little colour in her cheeks; but her lips made amends, for they were of a rich carmine, and, when parted, displayed an even row of little, pearl-white teeth. She was attired in a white yachting blouse of some dainty material, which—cut somewhat low—displayed her graceful white neck and throat, and gave but a glimpse of the smooth whiteness of her bosom. The be-ringed, taper fingers of her right hand hung over the boat's side, and allowed the water to touch their tips, causing a little ripple. It seemed to Ben Boardman that she was thus conferring a kindness upon the very sea.

And the man beside her, Ronald Douglas, her husband, also possessed features most striking to all who beheld him. Had Ben Boardman been an educated man, he would have compared the proprietor of the yawl to a Greek god, but the classics were complete strangers to the old boatman.

Nevertheless. Ronald Douglas did not appear like a man upon whom the world was smiling. There was a look of mental torture, of pain immeasurable, in his dark eyes. But his wife did not appear to notice anything amiss. She continued to chat, making use of a wondrous flow of small-talk, as was her wont, whilst her husband answered only in monosyllables, or not at all.

The boat grounded noiselessly, and Ben Boardman, touching his grizzled forelock, seized the gunwale and with a mighty shove succeeded in forcing the keel half a-boat's length farther in land.

A moment later he was holding one of Beatrice Douglas' little hands, whilst her husband stood beside him, holding the other. Poising herself for one second upon the boat's side, she sprang lightly between them upon the glistening sand. She smiled her thanks to the old man, such a smile as lived in his memory for many a day afterwards. In his roughly poetic way, he mentally compared it to the breaking dawn in summer, to the sunlight dancing on the waters, to something not of the earth earthly, but proceeding direct from Heaven.

Ronald Douglas carelessly tossed half-a-crown towards Ben, which the latter picked up, too astonished to mutter his guttural thanks. So the old man stood winking and blinking, in perplexity watching the two lithe and graceful receding forms, wondering if it were possible that they were those of anything less than a prince and princess *incognito*.

But he envied their lot not one whit; for did he not possess a certain old centre-board boat called the *Rescue*, and was she not worth all the gold in the mint, to him?

And he determined to put the lightly-earned piece of silver in the cracked tea-pot upon the mantelpiece in his tiny cabin, where all his extra pence were placed, in preparation for the day when the *Rescue* might require a thorough overhauling and repatching.

* * * * *

Ronald Douglas and his wife wended their way up the beach and along the esplanade; he, moody and taciturn; and she, with the gaiety that was a part of her very nature, carelessly chattering, chattering, chattering.

She was in the middle of a trivial remark concerning the occupant of a bath-chair, when he cut short her sentence, unfinished.

"Trixy," he said—he always called her by that name, no one else did so, and it seemed one more link in the chain of his great love for her, which bound her so closely to him—"Trixy, supposing that I was a poor man. Could you bear to be a poor man's wife?"

She pouted slightly, then looked up at him, smiling. "What an absurd idea to get into that very sensible head," she said banteringly. "You are not poor. So what does it matter?"

"But supposing——" he persisted.

"There are no grounds for the supposition. Why suppose absurdities?" and she brushed aside a stray curl from her forehead.

"But if——"

"But me no buts," she broke in, placing her hand chidingly before his mouth.

He tugged at his moustache, half viciously. The gloom in his eyes deepened. Could she not be serious, and take *him* seriously, for one minute?

"Listen," he said, halting, and taking her by the wrist. "I have a reason for asking you this. Tell me honestly. Could you bear a life of poverty?"

"Why, what do you mean, Ronald? Are you going to endow the church with all your worldly goods?"

She was still bantering. She could not conceive that his question had any serious meaning. She thought, perhaps, that he was merely testing the depth of her love for him.

"Could you bear it?" he repeated doggedly. A fever of anxiety, a world of eagerness, lay in his eyes.

"Certainly not," she replied decisively. "I would sooner *die* than be poverty-stricken. I think that I was made for riches, and that riches were made for me. Could a butterfly exist without sunlight, eh, *mon cher?*"

"You mean that?"

"Decidedly," she made answer, with perhaps more earnestness than she had ever made use of in her life.

Ronald Douglas dropped her wrist. He half turned, and continued his walk. A deathly-chill shudder swept through him. Yet his brain seemed to be on fire. He knew that she had spoken truly. He knew that she could never mate with poverty, knew that life would be a living death to her without its pleasures, its delicacies, its luxuries, obtainable only by those with a long banking account.

"I would sooner die than be poverty-stricken." These words kept surging with fearful significance again and again through his brain.

He cast a look seaward. His yacht lay in the offing. But *morally*, to-day, it was his no longer. In another week he would *legally* have no claim upon it. He was a ruined man.

And she—the woman whom he loved more than riches, fame, aye, even life itself—knew nothing of the blow about to fall upon them both.

She had resumed her careless small-talk, but he heard not a word. An echo of her voice seemed to hail him from the sky, and sea, and land. "I would sooner die than be poverty-stricken," it was dinning in his ears.

* * * * *

The evening shadows drew across the skies; the tide was at the full. A few occasional gusts of westerly wind stirred the surface of the Channel waters. Many styles of craft were lying lazily to their anchorage east and west of the pier. Slowly, imperceptibly, their outlines dimmed, and nothing but ghostly, shadowy objects rose and fell upon the black, heaving bosom o

Digitized by Google

the sea. Suddenly, almost simultaneously, the anchor lights were hoisted, looking like so many twinkling stars, the reflection of which twinkled yet more upon the surface of the sea. The only sound that broke upon Ben Boardman's ears was the sough, sough, of the waters as they lapped the esplanade beneath his feet, a fitting accompaniment to the silence of peace and contentment that stretch like a gauzy cloak about the waterside.

Ben Boardman's eyes dwelt upon the *Rescue* as she now rode to her anchor, and—his imagination playing strange tricks with his eyesight—he fancied he saw the same beautiful face, which had so deeply impressed him in the afternoon, gazing mournfully upon him from the stern of his old tub.

He had put aside all hopes of earning a few shillings by taking holiday-makers for a sail, for he had appealed to them in vain. But he sat upon a public seat, loath to go home, loath to leave his cherished *Rescue* for the night. Something impelled him to remain. Perhaps it was the face of Beatrice Douglas, which fancy had conjured up and had located in his own boat.

Suddenly, he felt a hand laid upon his shoulder. He turned round. The vision passed from his sight, only to give place to the smiling face of Beatrice Douglas in the flesh.

She smiled upon him as she had smiled at their former meeting. To Ben Boardman she appeared to illumine the very darkness.

He rose to his feet and touched his forelock. What could *she* want with such as him? he mentally questioned.

"Here he is, Ronald! Here is our old friend!" she cried gleefully, in a voice of surpassing sweetness.

Yes! Ronald Douglas could see him. He looked upon the old man as a condemned felon might look upon his executioner. He met the boatman's glance, and shuddered. Despair had entered into his soul. He was suffering the torture of the damned. He would have given up even then, at the eleventh hour, he would have turned aside from the purpose that seemed to goad him on with such relentless force and cruelty, had not he known that his wife's answer would have still been: "I would sooner die than be poverty-stricken."

His eyes roved restlessly around. Suddenly he perceived the *Rescue*, bobbing up and down, a few fathoms distant.

"My wife and I wish to go for a moonlight sail," he said, in an unnaturally calm voice. "Alone, you understand. What deposit shall I leave upon your old cask? What is her value to you?" And he pointed to the pride of Ben Boardman's heart.

"Cask!" the boatman muttered in indignation. "She's the tightest craft on the beach!"

"Yes. I dare say she is. That is what we want. Something tight and trim," Ronald Douglas replied reassuringly. Neither his wife nor Ben Boardman appeared to note the irony underlying his words.

"Fifty poun' is her value to me," said Ben.

Perhaps he would have disdained to carry on further conversation with one who had thus insulted him on his own hearth, as it were, had it not been for the beautiful, smiling face, and the lustrous eyes that gazed down upon him. Perhaps, but for Beatrice Douglas, he would have bidden the young man go his way.

The breeze freshened. The stars, which had already peeped forth, became ever and anon obscured by dark, fleeting clouds.

Ronald Douglas knew the value of such a boat as the *Rescue*. A ten-pound note should have purchased her at any time.

But what mattered her value to him? If the old man honestly thought her worth fifty pounds, he was entitled to the amount. This was no case for shilly-shallying.

He took a role of bank-notes out of his pocket-book, and counted out eleven.

"Here are fifty pounds as security for your boat," he said, "and a fiver for her hire."

Ben Boardman fairly gasped in his astonishment. Was the world coming to an end? or had an angel come upon him unawares?

Mechanically he put out his wrinkled hand, and took the proffered paper. Then he laid the little bundle on his knee, and counted the notes with trembling fingers, and great, wide-open staring eyes.

What would not this money buy? He thought of the mainsail that he was laying up his pence for; and he looked at the five-pound note with a feeling of unholy joy. He felt as though he was doing something wrong in taking so large a sum for a midnight sail, and his second impulse was to return the money to his patron.

Beatrice Douglas apparently read his thoughts, for she placed her warm little hand upon that of the old man, checking any movement.

"No, no," she said. "Keep it. You may want it to mend your boat. My husband is very rich, and you are quite welcome. The rest of the money is only in trust, you know. We might lose your boat and both be drowned, then you would have no one to repay you for your loss."

And she laughed merrily at the bare idea of such a contingency.

So the old man put one note in his pocket, and stowed the rest away in the bosom of his jersey.

It was a long time since he had had so large a sum in his possession, but he would not have exchanged his *Rescue* for fifty times fifty pounds.

Borrowing a dinghy from one of the neighbouring boatmen, old Ben Boardman sculled his customers alongside the tub-like craft, and put them aboard her.

He slipped the cable, knowing that the tide would have receded considerably, leaving it high and dry before she returned. Then he hoisted the jib and mainsail, hauled aft the sheet, and placed it in the hands of Ronald Douglas.

"What is the name of your boat?" Beatrice Douglas asked, as Ben Boardman hauled the dinghy up to the stern.

"The *Rescue*, lady," he replied, as he stepped over the side.

She smiled and nodded to him, as he slowly pulled away to the shore. And the old man mentally swore to change the name from "*Rescue*" to whatsoever name this angel lady bore.

But Ronald Douglas groaned in spirit. The *Rescue*! Well, it was the only means of rescue which he found to hand. He saw no other opportunity of saving his loved one from the poverty which—through rash and hazardous speculation—he had brought upon her.

"I would sooner die than be poverty-stricken." The words kept dinning in his ears, to the swish, swash, of the water lapping round the stem of the *Rescue*, with maddening persistency. Yes, he must follow the line of action which he had already mentally mapped out. There must be no divergence from the scheme. And she—she should never know how near she had been to that pauperism that she dreaded more than death. She

Digitized by Google

should remain happy, the gay, thoughtless, babbling, butterfly-like creature she had ever been, until—until the scheme should reach accomplishment.

He set his teeth hard, steadied the helm, and sailed the *Rescue* to the southward.

And Beatrice Douglas chatted incessantly, speculating upon the success of a naval ball, to which they had been invited, which was to take place at Portsmouth in the following week.

* * * * *

They had been out somewhat over an hour, and had run before the wind, up channel, for a distance of four or five knots.

"I think we had better bring her round now," said Ronald Douglas, and he raised his great, sad eyes to his wife's brilliant bewitching ones, half questioningly.

"By all means, Ronald, let us go back," she replied, shivering slightly. "You are not yourself this evening. Your companionship is as delightful as that of any well-conducted bear, excepting that you do not indulge in hugging."

He put the helm down, the *Rescue* answered quickly, and he steadied her, hauling in the slack of the sheets, so that she shot along on the starboard tack.

The moon's light broke between the ever passing clouds, and played upon the dazzling beauty of the woman beside him.

He looked upon her, hungrily, despairingly. Then he drew her to him, and imprinted kiss after kiss upon her lovely mouth.

"Why did you wish so particularly to sail this boat?" she asked later. "It is much pleasanter on board the *Freak of Fortune*."

"Because—because I wanted something that I could sail myself, unassisted. That is why I took yon old man's ewe-lamb."

She shuddered. The light died out of her eyes, giving place to a look of alarm. Some subtle note in her husband's tones had terrified her. She had never known him to speak in a voice so pregnant with restrained pain. It was as the voice of one mentally tortured. She could not understand it. She merely sat silent, shivering, watching him, not daring to take her eyes from his.

The wind had increased in strength, and the *Rescue* sped along in a south-westerly direction towards the coast of France.

Directing his wife to take the helm and keep the vessel upon her course, Ronald Douglas sprang forward and hauled up the centre-board. The time of Beatrice Douglas' deliverance had come.

Instantly the *Rescue* heeled to port. Her gunwale went under; the water rushed in like an avalanche.

"Hard over! hard over!" the wretched man shrieked. His wife would never have to face poverty. She was already facing death. Her face was white as marble; her lips were blue; her beautiful eyes were starting from their sockets.

But she did his bidding bravely.

At the same time, knowing something of seamanship, she attempted to let go the main sheet. A shriek broke from her parted lips, another, and another. Her husband had made it fast, so that she could not cast it adrift. The death-trap was complete. In a frenzy of terror she tore her dainty fingers, till the blood spurted from them, in futilely attempting to wrench the bolt out. Now, when it was too late, Ronald Douglas would have bartered away his soul to save the life of the woman he loved.

All this took scarcely five seconds, but it seemed a life-time to the man clinging to the ring of the centre-board, with those agonised shrieks ringing in his ears.

The *Rescue* answered to her helm. The jib fluttered for a moment, then the breeze struck the mainsail with a resounding thud. The boom swung from port to starboard, crashing against the head of Ronald Douglas. He was visible, alive, a man in his full strength, an instant before; then for a moment his tall form swayed in the dimness of the night, and it splashed inertly into the sea. Then the *Rescue* turned over like a top. She capsized as the moon once again shone out in all her brilliancy. And before another cloud obscured the light, it shone down upon the slight keel of a flat-bottomed sailing boat, of which the centre-board had been drawn up.

* * * * *

The following afternoon the tide washed the *Rescue* ashore not far from the Worthing pier. Old Ben Boardman, who had watched for her, almost heart-broken, throughout the night, was the first to espy the wreckage floating in on the blue waters. And a dire foreboding—a memory of the phantom face which he had seen, seemingly smiling from her stern on the night previous—told him that this was what remained to him of that which had been his pride.

When they hauled her high and dry, they discovered the body of a woman whose skirts were twisted tightly in and out of the main sheet.

Ben Boardman staggered back with a hard, dry sob. The face was pressed close against the stern sheets, but it was no longer looking towards him, the eyes no longer shone, and the lips were not now red, as he had seen them. For the eyes were wide open, staring, glassy, sightless, and the lips were black as night.

He bent forward and reverently kissed the bruised fingers, as the knot of fishermen raised the still form and carried it up the beach.

Then he staggered to his little cabin in the side street, and, taking a roll of bank-notes from an old, spoutless tea-pot, he calmly struck a lucifer and applied the light to them, watching the flame intently until every vestige of the paper had been consumed.

Afterwards he made his way to a tub at the back of his shanty and washed his wrinkled hands—honest hands they were, but he felt as though there was blood upon them.

* * * * *

The *Rescue* lay moored upon the beach. Her work was done. Never again would Ben Boardman sail her. He used to potter down to the beach day after day and sit there gazing seaward; and he watched the pride of his heart gradually breaking up, falling asunder, under the fierce beat of the rays of the summer sun and the wearing lash of the waves and the ruthless hand of time.

One morning, after a storm, the *Rescue* was nowhere to be seen. Only a few planks, rotten to the core, bestrewed the beach.

Ben Boardman hobbled down to his accustomed resting place and perceived what had befallen the boat.

He found a rusty ring-bolt beneath the breakwater. This he took home with him.

A neighbour found him the next day, stretched cold and stiff, with the ring-bolt clasped tightly in his hand, and a smile, as of glad recognition, upon his wrinkled face.

W. Keppel Honnywill.

Digitized by Google

MY LAST GAME OF CHESS.

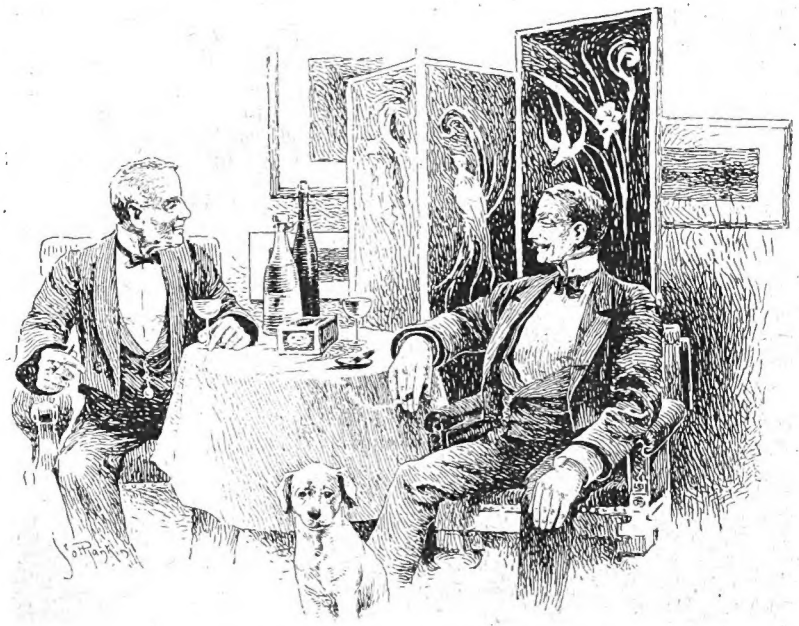
"DO you mean to say, Doctor, that you have introduced chess among your patients?"

"Yes. Why not? Some of these poor creatures, although they suffer from various forms of madness, are able at times to exercise certain faculties of mind with a brilliancy that is really remarkable."

"But surely they are not capable of playing a rational and sustained game?"

"Oh, yes! I have myself, though you know me to be a fairly good player, been beaten by a mad patient. Of course, at times, their play is whimsical and erratic; but even then, if I may say so, there is often a good deal of method in their madness. It is rather curious that at the present time I have under my charge a poor fellow whose mental derangement is almost entirely the result of excessive chess-playing. He indulged in his favourite pastime to such an extent that it ultimately affected his mind.

"We do not allow him even the sight of a chessboard, because anything to do with the game seems to rouse in him the worst form of his madness. Sometimes he will sit for hours playing with an imaginary opponent, and whenever he has these fits he always ends by exclaiming: 'Mate in six moves!' He then deliberately counts the six moves aloud, and when in his disordered imagination he has made the final move, he becomes very violent, and is then dangerous to himself and other people. He was a remarkably brilliant blindfold player, but whether he actually retains the power of mentally working out a game I am unable to say."



We were spending the evening very pleasantly.

The speakers were myself and Dr. Chorley, the famous "mad doctor," whose private asylum was generally recognised as one of the best institutions of the kind in Europe. My friend, the expert in insanity, I should here interpolate, is not really called Chorley, but for the purpose of this little story I have so chosen to style him. I was staying a few days with the Doctor, and we had been spending the evening very pleasantly over a game or two of chess. We had finished our play, and the Doctor was telling me a few things concerning his patients, in the course of which he narrated an anecdote about a game of chess played by two of the inmates of his asylum, which led to the conversation above recorded.

Shortly afterwards the Doctor retired for the night, leaving me alone to write a few letters which I was anxious to get off the first thing the next morning. For several minutes I went on smoking my cigar, turning over in my mind the idea of mad people playing chess, and then settled down to my letters.

I had not been writing long when I heard the handle of the door turn and someone come in.

I looked up, expecting to see Dr. Chorley, but to my surprise a complete stranger stood before me. "Oh!" I thought, "one of the Doctor's assistants whom I have not happened to meet before;" but it certainly struck me as rather strange that he should have entered my host's private study at the time when the rest of the household were in bed, for the Doctor, on bidding me good-night, had told me I was the last up.

I naturally waited a moment for my visitor to speak, expecting he would apologise for the intrusion, or at any rate explain his presence. To my utter surprise, however, he stood perfectly motionless, fixed his eyes upon me, and remained silent.

"Whoever you are," I thought, "you are a pretty cool customer," and feeling annoyed at what seemed to me the fellow's insolence, I said, with some dignity: "I don't understand——"

"You play chess?" he interrupted, without apparently noticing that I had attempted to speak, and all the time keeping his eyes fixed upon me.

This was certainly extraordinary, and as I looked at my strange visitor the truth all at once seemed to dawn upon me—the man was mad!

I am not naturally nervous, but I must confess to feeling something akin to fear when I realised that I

Digitized by Google

was face to face with a man who, for all I knew, might be a dangerous lunatic.

My worst anticipations were soon realised. Without taking his eyes off me he walked to the mantelpiece and deliberately took up the large revolver which the Doctor always kept at hand in case of a surprise, and which I knew to be loaded.

My unwelcome guest had certainly now the best of the position. What was I to do? To make a bolt of it would be to offer myself a target to this homicidal madman; to shout for help might equally be the signal for him to send a bullet through me; and yet I would not stand still and be shot like a rat in a hole.

"I must humour him," I thought, "and so gain time, as his absence must soon be discovered."

My mind, however, was somewhat relieved when he repeated, in the same quiet tone of voice:

"You play chess?"

It was something, at any rate, to know that I was not to be instantly shot.

"Yes," I replied in my most winning manner. "Would you like a game?"

Without speaking, he sat down in front of me, carefully placing the pistol on the table, near his right hand.

When the pieces were arranged, he looked at me with a most diabolical expression on his face, and said:

"You will play for your life. If I win, I shall shoot you on the spot; if I lose, I shall kill myself," and he deliberately examined the revolver, as if to assure himself that it was loaded.

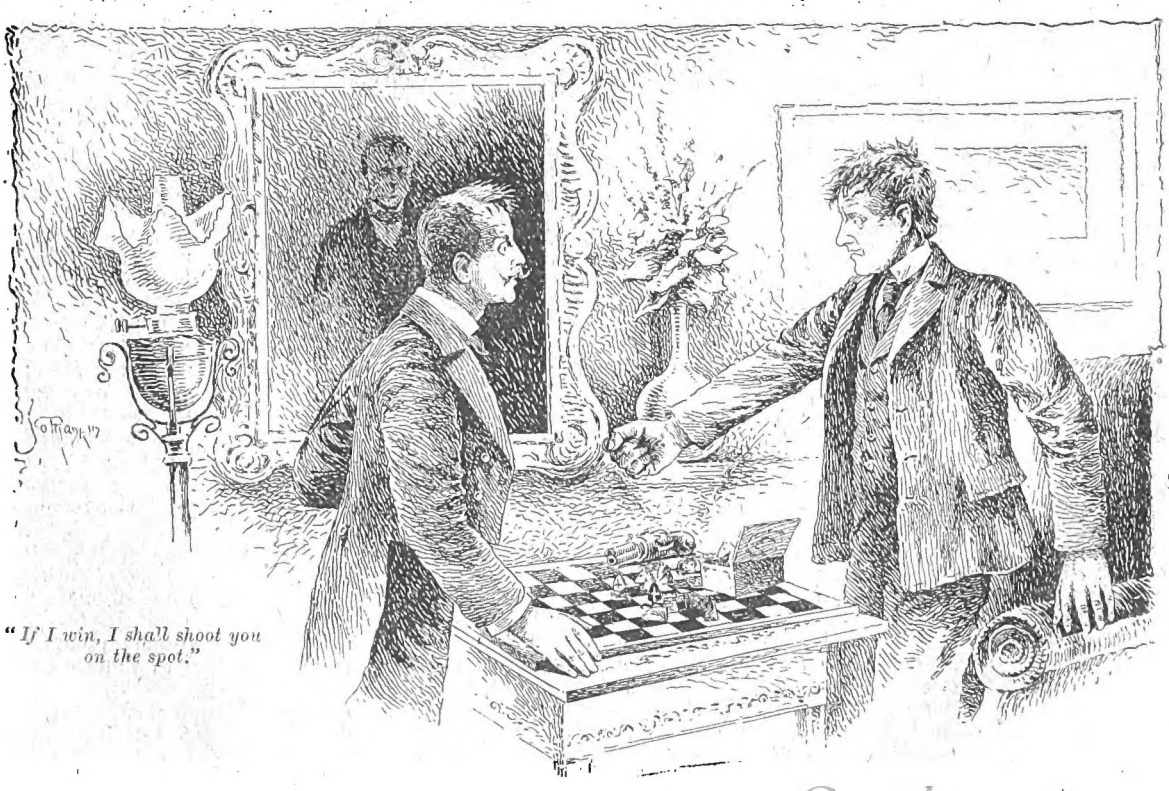
The reader will imagine what my feelings were on hearing this ultimatum. Imagine sitting down at a chess table at midnight with an armed lunatic, who tells you in terrible earnest that he will murder you if he beats you. What a fiendish whim! Under ordinary circumstances, I knew I was liable to make mistakes, and lose a game against an inferior player, but it is difficult to describe what I felt at being obliged to play, when a false move might cost me my life.

A hundred thoughts flashed through my brain. Could my grim and terrible opponent really play an accurate game? If he could, should I be able to make a stand against him till some one came to my rescue? Even if I could beat him, what guarantee had I that my life would not still be in danger? And, besides, I was morally bound to prevent, if possible, the man taking his own life.

I looked up at him. His eyes were fixed upon the board with a terrible stare, and there appeared to be no escape from the awful ordeal of being forced to stake my life on a game of chess.

Without consulting me he selected the white pieces and moved first. He played what chess players call an irregular opening, but there was nothing very remarkable or fantastic about it. I tried to keep cool, but as I lifted the pieces my hand trembled and my head felt on fire.

I soon discovered that my opponent knew perfectly well what he was doing, and that whatever the particular form his madness might take, it did not prevent him from playing the game accurately and in earnest. He quickly forced an exchange of pieces to his own advantage, and secured a vigorous attack upon my king. The position, no doubt, was a simple one to defend, but my feelings had been wrought up to such a state of excite-



"If I win, I shall shoot you on the spot."

Digitized by Google

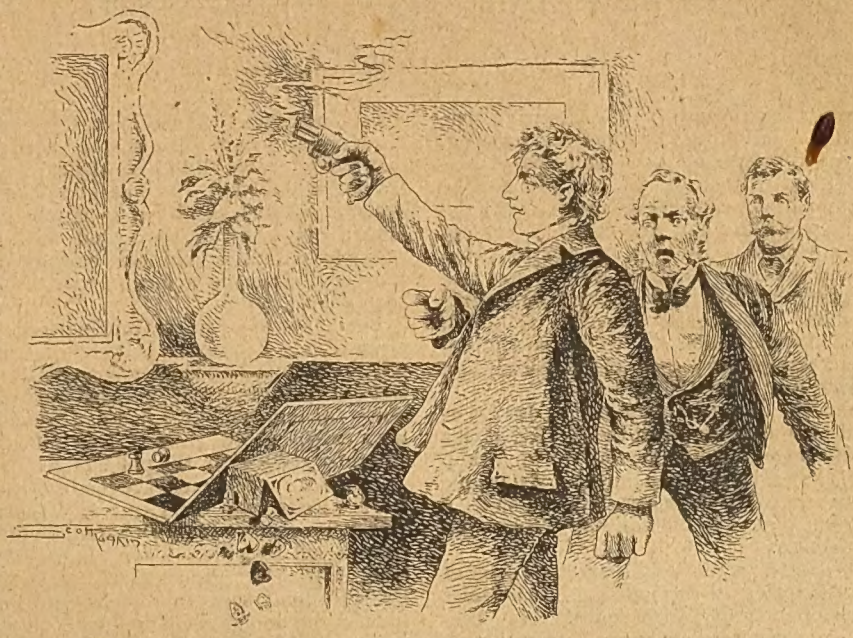
ment that I seemed incapable of analysing the most ordinary combinations.

Suddenly I was startled by my opponent almost hissing between his teeth:

"Mate in six moves!"

Good heavens! This, then, was the man of whom my host had been talking. A cold shiver ran through me. The terrible words: "Mate in six moves," sounded in my ears like a death-knell.

"What did they mean?" I asked myself. "Did the demented wretch see his way clear to force a mate in six moves, in spite of anything I could do? Or was he only uttering an expression he was in the habit of using, which had no significance for the game we were engaged in?"



Just in time to knock the would-be assassin's arm in an upward direction.

I tried to calm myself in order to examine the position on the board. So far as I could make out, it was impossible to force a mate in six moves, and except that my opponent had some advantage in the matter of attack, our positions seemed to me about equal.

After uttering the ominous words: "Mate in six moves," my opponent leant back in his chair and indulged in a series of horrible chuckles which seemed to make my blood run cold. Then resuming his former attitude, he slowly lifted his queen.

"One," he cried, as he brought the piece down with a bang which shook the table.

By making this move, he offered me a piece, which I promptly took, thinking he had made a blunder which would give me the game.

"Two," said my opponent, without a moment's hesitation, as he replaced one of my knights with his own, while I, thinking to be a piece to the good, accepted the exchange, and took his knight off the board.

The moment I had done so I realised that I had fallen into a fatal trap. It was plain that I must be mated in four moves, and without doubt this cunning madman had foreseen the mate six moves ahead.

"Three," he cried, the white queen giving check to my king.

Great beads of perspiration now began to break out on my forehead. I had lost the game, and unless someone came to my rescue, I thought I should most assuredly be killed. I pretended to be studying the position, but my head was busy trying to concoct some scheme for my escape from this terrible dilemma. Seeing, however, that my opponent was getting excited, I moved my king to the only available square.

"Four—check!" he almost shouted, as he moved his queen one square back.

My position was now desperate. I could only prolong the game by interposing my rook, and as I reluctantly pushed the piece forward, I saw with horror my opponent pick up the pistol.

"Five—check!" and away went my rook.

My king had now only one move to be followed by a checkmate. Never shall I forget what my feelings were at that moment, and now that the time for action had come I felt powerless to move hand or foot. My head seemed to reel, and almost mechanically I made my last move.

"Six—mate!" he literally shrieked, and I saw him raise the revolver on a level with my head. Instinctively I closed my eyes, and the next instant there was a loud report, and I fell to the floor unconscious.

* * * * *

"How do you feel now? You had a narrow escape."

I opened my eyes and saw Dr. Chorley bending over me.

"Is that you, Doctor?" I murmured. "Am I really alive? I thought I was dead."

"You are not only alive, but uninjured," was the comforting reply; and then my host told me that at the very moment the madman raised the revolver to fire at me he had noiselessly entered the room, and was just in time to knock the would-be assassin's arm in an upward direction, so that the weapon went off without doing more harm than a little damage to the wall. I had simply been overcome and fallen down in a dead faint, owing to the mental strain I had undergone. My opponent had been immediately overpowered by the keepers, who were waiting in readiness.

It seems that, after bidding me good-night, the Doctor had had occasion to open the sliding-door arrangement, which when closed effectually shut off the house from the asylum. By some means my mad opponent had slipped through unobserved, and made his way to the study. His absence had been discovered, and the Doctor and his assistants had instituted a quiet and careful search, until at length, hearing a noise in the study, they made all haste there, and arrived just in time, as I believe, to save my life.

When I said good-bye to the Doctor next day I made up my mind that it would be a long time before I paid him another visit, and to this day I never sit down to a game of chess.

J. Powell Ellis.

Digitized by Google

A Miraculous Cure.

From the French of Jean Rameau.

Dr. Guichemerre was not in a cheerful mood; fortune had frowned upon him of late and the prospect was gloomy. For forty years he had been the village doctor at Saint-Leon. Although not very learned, he had cured as many patients as most village doctors; and if there were some whom he had not cured, it was not because he had not tried. He was a worthy, conscientious man, and the inhabitants of Saint-Leon had something to thank him for, taking one thing with another. Things had gone pretty smoothly with him, and his supreme ambition, which was to become Maire of the district, had seemed very near realisation, when fortune changed her demeanour towards him.

Guichemerre was the chemist as well as the doctor of Saint-Leon. But a few months prior to the opening of this story a second-rate chemist had come and set up a shop quite close to his; and in order to impress the people whom he hoped to secure as customers, he had made a fine display of drugs, patent medicines, hair-washes and numerous other articles.

The villagers began to patronise him and took some of Guichemerre's prescriptions to be made up; the chemist at once seized the opportunity to laugh at these prescriptions—they certainly were not up-to-date, although just as efficacious as many of the modern ones—and as a consequence of this ridicule Guichemerre lost most of his profitable trade in drugs.

That was bad enough, but worse followed. A young doctor, a friend of the rival chemist, settled in Saint-Leon, and was, of course, warmly recommended to the customers of the latter. That was the finishing stroke. Guichemerre found his connection gradually going, and finally we see him moodily warming himself by the fire and wondering what was to be done.

On this particular winter morning his sadness was several degrees deeper than it had been at any time previously; and for this reason:

Among the few of his customers who had remained faithful to their old doctor was the policeman. This official had a little boy of three, who was the playmate of Guichemerre's grandson, and had become such a favourite with the doctor that the old man had treated him almost like a grandchild. Well, this child had been ill for four days, and Guichemerre had not been summoned to attend Robert. Was even the policeman going to throw him over for this Doctor Preville, in spite of all the kindness which he had shown to him and his little boy?

For three days Guichemerre had not had a patient, and during all that time he had been constantly on the watch and the listen for the policeman. And this, the fourth, day promised to be a repetition of the preceding three.

Guichemerre arose from his chair and paced up and down, stopping occasionally to look out of the window to see if the policeman was coming. Suddenly he heard the thud of a horse's hoofs on the hard ground; he hurried to the window just in time to see Dr. Preville dash past on a prancing horse in the direction of the policeman's house.

So it was true! Little Robert was being attended by his successful rival! It was too hard to bear; the old man sat down heavily in his chair, covered his face with his hands and wept. It was good-bye to his dream of becoming Maire, good-bye to Saint Leon; he could no longer earn a living there, and must go away with his widowed daughter and her boy to some place where they could manage to live on what little money he had been able to save.

Four days afterwards Guichemerre returned to Saint-Leon from a journey he had undertaken. He had found a little cottage in a hamlet some miles distant, and he and his daughter were preparing to pack their things ready for removal. He had not been in the house an hour when there came a ring at the bell, and his daughter ushered in the policeman.

"Doctor," exclaimed the man, his eyes filling with tears, "we're very sorry, me and the missus. You've been very good to little Bob and we didn't ought to ha' gone to Dr. Preville. I don't know why we did go, I'm sure. But, Doctor, poor Bob's worse" (sob) "and Dr. Preville don't seem to do him no good—says as the little chap has got some dreadful complaint with a long name——we've never heard it before in these parts. Looks as if it's all up with him, poor chap" (sob) "though the doctor won't say anything. And Bob's been asking for *you*. Won't you come? Just to please *him!* Perhaps you can cure him!"

He tried to keep a stern face and make excuses; he knew nothing of the case, Dr. Preville would take it as a slight and so on; but the sorrowing father had an answer for all. Dr. Preville knew that he was going to call Dr. Guichemerre; he now felt that he had done wrong in not having the older doctor, who must know more than a young one; and much more to the same effect. So Guichemerre, who was secretly overjoyed, set off with the village constable for the sick-room.

There was no doubt that little Bob was very ill, that was quite clear; but what on earth was the matter with him? Guichemerre felt the boy's pulse, looked at his tongue, sounded him, tapped his thin body in different parts, but could arrive at no decision. He was dreadfully perplexed; there was no disease that he could perceive, yet the boy was evidently wasting away and would undoubtedly die if something were not done to rouse him and make him eat. His mother was crying and his father doing his best to keep back the tears; this naturally had a depressing effect upon the child, who had brightened up a little on the appearance of the doctor, but was now lying in a listless condition and occasionally whimpering. Something must be done to drive away those gloomy faces.

"We'll soon set him right!" said the old man cheerily. He uttered a few long medical terms so as to reassure the parents, and soon afterwards left the house to make up some medicine which would do the boy a lot of good.

"God forgive me!" murmured the doctor as he walked home. "I would give something to save him, but *I*

Digitized by Google

don't know what ails him and I am afraid he will not recover!"

Actuated by a desire to save the boy for the parents' sake, Guichmerre, whose preparations for removal were suspended, did all he possibly could. He went two or three times each day, he changed the medicine, and he offered up earnest prayers on the child's behalf; but neither the one nor the other made any apparent difference; at the end of three days there was no improvement and the doctor was at his wits' end.

In the meantime some of his former patients came back to him. The fact that Dr. Preville no longer attended Bob and that Dr. Guichemerre was curing him—so the rumour ran—operated in favour of the latter. It was a terribly anxious time for Guichemerre. If the boy recovered, what happiness for the parents, what honour for himself! If he died—the doctor shuddered at the thought!

On the fourth day the doctor would not allow the parents to be in the room while he was examining the child. The fact was, he wished to hide from them that he could do nothing; he was afraid that they would see through his ruses, and would give way to grief when they learnt the truth, and thus, perhaps, spoil what little chance still remained of saving the boy. He must be alone, he said; he was going to treat the boy in a special manner—an invention of his own.

He shut the door and locked it. Then he sat down by the child's bedside and began to talk to him in an aimless way; he did not know what else to do. He had a box with him. A friend had sent a present—a toy—for his grandson, and he had been to the railway station to fetch it.

He thought he might as well open the box and see what it contained. It would serve to while away the fifteen minutes or so which he usually stayed in the room, and Bob might like to see the toy.

It was a splendid toy engine, going by clockwork, and, (according to a card in the box) at certain intervals it would give a shrill little whistle. It was so beautifully made, that Guichemerre held it up to admire it, and forgot his patient until reminded of his presence by an exclamation of delight. Turning to the boy, he saw that his face was animated with excitement, the first real sign of life since he had first attended the child. The doctor started as an idea flashed across his mind.

"Isn't it pretty?" he asked, holding it in front of the child, whose eyes were lighted up by a pleased expression. Little Bob looked at it and touched it.

"Does it go along by itself?" he inquired.

"Of course it does!" replied Guichemerre. "You just watch!"

There was a long bench-like table under the window. The doctor quickly cleared it and dragged it across the uncarpeted floor to the bedside. A few turns of the key, and the engine ran along the table, a piping whistle coming from it every few seconds. The boy shrieked with delight and tried to raise himself in the bed; Guichemerre propped him up and started the engine again.

This continued for about ten minutes, when the doctor felt that he must desist or the little patient would be over-excited. The difference in Bob's appearance was astounding, and when the worthy medico left the room (after having put everythin g straight, and wrapped up the toy) he was able to say, with perfect truth, in answer to the perplexed inquiries of the parents: "He's much better this morning."

He hurried home and made up a tonic; then he wrote a letter to the friend in Paris, who had sent the toy-engine.

When Guichemerre paid his second visit, towards evening, he found the policeman and his wife delighted and astonished at the change in the child's condition. He was so much brighter, and had begun to eat his food as though he wanted it. They were, however, anxious about one thing: Bob had been talking a great deal about something they could not understand. "It goes round." "It whistles," and several other things. They hoped his brain was not affected.

"He's all right in the head," returned the doctor. "Take no notice of what he says, only see that he takes the tonic. I will not see him again to-day, in case my new treatment excites him." He was glad that they had not guessed the truth.

The next day the same thing took place. The parents got no nearer the truth, probably because Bob, being more accustomed to the toy, did not say so much. The policeman and his wife did not worry themselves much about what little he did say; they saw that he was getting slowly better, and they had the doctor's assurance that Bob's head was all right.

The following day Guichemerre had a new toy, and afterwards he took them alternately. This went on for some days, Bob's condition improving daily. At last, one morning the doctor made such a noise amusing his patient—who was by that time almost convalescent—that the perplexed father and mother tried the door and, finding it unlocked, came hurrying into the room.

Guichemerre uttered an exclamation of fright, scrambled the engine into the box and, giving a confused reply to the question as to whether anything was wrong, simply bolted from the house.

For the first time he realised the ridiculous position he was in. Everybody in the place believed that he was treating Bob according to some new system of medicine—he had said "an invention of his own"—and he had simply been playing with a toy. He could never face his patients again; he would be the laughing stock of Saint-Leon.

But that evening he was set at rest by a visit from the schoolmaster.

"I am an occasional contributor to a scientific journal in Paris, Dr. Guichemerre," said the schoolmaster, "and I have come to ask you if you will be so good as to let me examine that wonderful invention which has enabled you to cure the policeman's son. I am convinced that a description of such an apparatus, accompanied by the details of your mode of treatment which I hope you will give me, will be read with the greatest interest."

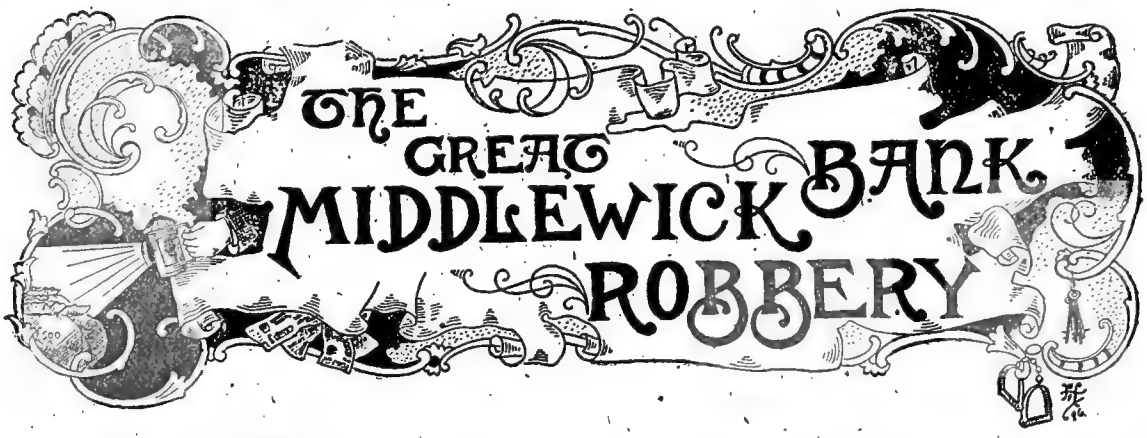
He bowed. Dr. Guichemerre had hard work to preserve his gravity. But he was relieved of all anxiety; it was clear that the parents of little Bob had not seen enough of the toy to distinguish it, and were of opinion that it was some surgical or similar apparatus.

"I am exceedingly sorry that I cannot oblige you," replied the doctor, "but I am unable, for important reasons, to make the invention public just now. I hope to explain all that is new in my treatment at a meeting of the College of Surgeons in due course."

* * * * *

I have just heard from Saint-Leon that Dr. Guichemerre, the Maire, will be the popular candidate at the next Parliamentary election, and that he will certainly be elected.

Digitized by Google



SUMMARY.

Mr. Bryant, *Manager of Middlewick Bank.*	John Warren, *Old Watchman.*
Herbert Stewart, *Cashier.*	Jack Burton, *New Watchman—a detective in disguise.*
Frank Rutherford, *Book-keeper.*	Miss Denton, *Bryant's niece, and in love with Rutherford.*
Alfred Taylor, *Detective.*	

£20,000 is stolen from the Bank one night while John Warren is asleep. The only persons apparently aware of the key to the combination lock are Mr. Bryant and Mr. Stewart. Taylor is led to suspect Frank Rutherford of having obtained the key to the lock, and shadows him. It appears that an attempt is to be made on the strong room by three notorious burglars—Nash, King, and Birch—who know nothing about the previous robbery. Arrangements are made to capture them, and two constables—Bates and Morton—are to be placed in the building, while Taylor and Burton watch outside.

CHAPTER VII.

They have Come at Last.

The police superintendent of Middlewick not only knew when to hold his peace but made no mistake when he selected the police officers, Bates and Morton, to assist in capturing the criminals who had plotted to rob the town bank. The chosen men were big, strong, courageous fellows, possessing good judgment.

Precisely at nine o'clock they walked slowly past the institution in which they were to spend the night. Their acquaintances whom they met nodded in friendly recognition, but observed nothing in the manner of the couple to suggest that anything unusual was on their minds.

When in front of the building, Bates, who was walking on the outside edge of the pavement, said in a low tone, referring to Burton:

"He's there."

"I won't turn my head. Is he looking this way?"

"He doesn't seem to be, but we can't tell at this distance."

"It's time he raised his hat, if he's going to."

"He isn't; something's wrong."

Bates was right; the new watchman strolled past, as though in a brown study, and, turning the first corner, disappeared. It was evident he had discovered something suspicious. What it was none but he could say, but it must have been unmistakable, else he would have made the signal agreed upon.

Neither of the officers knew the suspected parties, though both had fixed upon a couple of strangers in the town as likely to be members of the trio.

Without any change of pace or manner, Bates and Morton strolled down the street and out towards the outskirts of the town.

"Here comes one of them," remarked Morton in an undertone.

He referred to a tall, well-dressed man, approaching on the same side of the street at a leisurely pace.

"Thank goodness here's another day nearly over," said Bates, "I shall be only too thankful to get home to-night. I'm dead beat. What do you mean to do to-night?"

"As soon as we're off duty I must stay at the station awhile, and then I, too, shall turn in for the night."

The brief conversation was apparently without point or interest, but really it was intended for the benefit of the approaching man, whom both believed to be one of the criminals. The words were so timed that the stranger must have heard them all, and doubtless gained the impression they meant him to gain.

As soon as they were beyond earshot Bates remarked:

"I bet you what you like that's Sam Birch."

"What makes you think that?"

"That new watchman said he's cross-eyed; didn't you notice it?"

"Yes."

"That settles it."

"You're right, I expect, for he's certainly a stranger to Middlewick. Pretty bright fellow that new watchman, Bates."

"Yes; he must be getting good wages to take old Warren's place."

"Wonder if he'll stop long," Morton added.

"Perhaps a week or so—that is, until this job is finished."

They laughed again. Evidently they had their own theories as to the personality of Jack Burton.

Their leisurely walk had brought the policemen out opposite to Mr. Bryant's private residence. The lower part was lighted up, and at the moment of passing Frank Rutherford entered the gate and walked briskly up the gravelled walk which led to the door.

"He's rather late calling," remarked Bates.

"He'll remedy that by taking longer," observed his companion, and no other reference was made to the matter. The words showed the general view in which the young couple were regarded in Middlewick.

Time was getting on, and the officers once more turned in the direction of the bank. Before coming in sight of it they encountered the cross-eyed man again, but this time he was on the opposite side of the street. They gave him no apparent attention, nor did he manifest any interest in them.

"He's been to see if everything's all right," hazarded Bates, a view in which his companion agreed.

"Hulloa!" whispered Morton, "what's the meaning of this?"

A few yards in front of them, walking in the same direction, was the watchman from whom they had taken their final directions. Where he came from neither could say. Though he did not look round, nor seem to be aware of the proximity of the policemen, the latter knew there was no mistake in the matter. He was certain they were behind him and his presence was no accident.

Digitized by Google

"He's been shadowing Birch," observed Bates.

"Risky business, for Birch might turn the tables."

"The new watchman knows a thing or two."

If Burton wished to be joined by the policeman he would slacken his pace. If he desired to increase the distance between him and themselves, he would walk faster. He did neither, therefore they knew he wished things to remain as they were. In the same aimless fashion the watchman strolled on, turning several times before he reached the street leading to the bank.

Bates glanced at his watch.

"Twelve minutes past nine," he said; "he'll reach the corner punctually at the quarter."

"Yes, and we'll get the signal this time for certain."

"I expect so, as Birch is out of the way, unless," added Bates, "my gentleman takes it into his head to have another look round."

Morton glanced over his shoulder. Nothing was to be seen of the burly criminal with whom they expected soon to have a struggle.

Bates was right. As the town clock was chiming the quarter past the hour, Jack Burton walked past the bank on the opposite side of the street. While the eyes of both the men were on him he raised his hand and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

It was the pre-arranged signal.

Without glancing either to the right or to the left, to make sure everything was right, Bates, in the most natural manner, turned slightly to the right, and, in the most natural manner, ascended the steps to the bank. His companion did the same, and was at his elbow when the former grasped the brass knob of the outer door. The next instant an impatient exclamation escaped him.

The door was locked.

For some cause old Warren had secured the fastening against any unexpected intrusion. Thus the first step in the drama was a slip. Nothing of the kind had been counted on, for the watchman had instructions to leave the door unlocked from half-past eight until ten o'clock. He had understood it, and his blunder was unintelligible.

The situation was trying in the extreme. To stand there rattling the door was sure to attract the attention of passers-by and disarrange the programme, while to go away would be every inch as bad, since the same difficulty would still confront them.

"What's to be done?" asked the perplexed Bates, his hand still on the knob.

"I'm blessed if I know, unless——"

"Kick at the door till you wake him! He's in there asleep!"

The words were uttered by some one passing the building. The person did not look at them while making the suggestion, but the men recognised him at a glance as Burton.

Bates followed instruction. He rattled the door harder than ever, and, raising his heavy boot, delivered a kick that threatened to carry the structure off its hinges.

Immediate results followed. The key turned in the lock, and the door opened and the scared face of the old watchman peered out at them.

"Bless me! what's the matter, officers?" he asked in a shaking voice.

The policemen stepped quickly inside, and locked the door behind them.

"You idiot!" said Morton angrily; "what do you mean by having that door locked?"

"Why, gentlemen, them's my instructions," was the wondering reply, as the old man stood before them, plainly revealed in the dim light of the several gas jets that were kept burning all night.

"Weren't you told to leave it unlocked until we came?"

The watchman scratched his head meditatively.

"Bless me, so I was; but really it slipped my mind. I hope you will excuse me, gentlemen."

"Why didn't you open the door before? We've been trying to get in for the last five minutes or more."

"I heard you, gentlemen, but you see my rheumatiz makes me move so slow that——"

"Oh! be quiet; go and finish your sleep if you want to, but don't bother us any more."

The watchman apparently thought it best to obey the instructions of the officer of the law, especially as they were given in so decided a tone. He walked to the settee where he had been reclining and sat down with folded arms, his gaze following the figures of the two policemen. He wondered what they intended to do. They had not offered any explanation, nor did he dare ask for any, but he determined to find out.

He sat for several minutes bolt upright. That position, however, soon became tiresome, and he assumed an easier one. By-and-bye, he shifted again, and then—the natural consequences followed—he sank into a deep sleep.

Meanwhile the two policemen lost no time. Although the visitors were not expected for several hours, the couple arranged matters as though they were liable to drop in at any moment, which indeed may be said to have been the fact.

The vault was at the back of the large business-room of the building, being let into the solid wall, so that when the door was closed a comparatively even surface was presented. It was secured by the new combination, known only to the manager and cashier.

He rattled the door harder than ever.

The only other room used by the institution was reached, as has already been explained, by passing along the side of the business portion still further to the rear. All the blinds were down, so that no one could overlook the building at night from the street.

Bates and Morton spent several minutes familiarising themselves with the building. With the more public portion of the bank they were comparatively familiar, but the manager's room was, of course, new ground to them.

"Here is the place to wait," remarked Bates, as they reached this apartment, and turning the manager's chair round from the desk he proceeded to make himself as comfortable as possible.

His companion likewise assumed an easy posture near him, for they had nothing to do now but await the arrival of their visitors. That they would certainly present themselves before morning neither felt the least doubt.

Excepting the large clock fastened against the wall, the two men were quite alone, but the very ticking which at first had given them such a sense of companionship at last became a source of irritation. It seemed as though its hands would never move, and they could easily have cheated themselves into believing it had suspended business for the evening, had it not been for the monotonous sound it gave forth.

Outside the footsteps of the passers-by echoed loudly as they passed the corner, the numbers gradually growing fewer as the night progressed.

Bates, half in earnest, insisted now and then that he recognised certain persons by the peculiarity in the noise made by their feet.

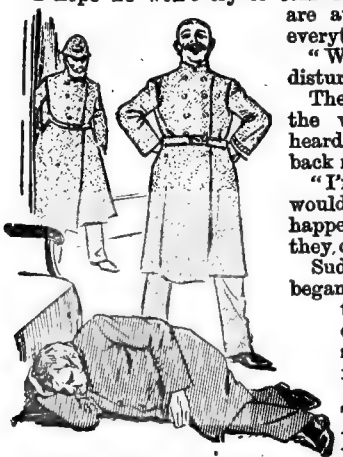
Digitized by Google

"That's the guv'nor," he suddenly whispered; "I'm certain I've not made a mistake about *him!*"

The doubting Morton softly rose and peered round the edge of the curtain.

"You're right," he said, coming back to his seat; "he's interested in this affair."

"I hope he won't try to come inside to see whether we are awake. It might spoil everything."



Quickly joined his friend, who was shaking with laughter.

"Worse than that, it would disturb Warren."

The regular breathing of the watchman was plainly heard by the couple in the back room.

"I'm glad he's asleep; he would kick up a row if he happened to be awake when they came."

Suddenly the town clock began striking eleven. Morton looked up at the face of the office clock, and saw that it was exactly right.

"I hoped it was later. This is tiresome. I wish those fellows would keep better hours."

The policeman rose, yawned, stretched his massive limbs, and then sat down again.

"They'll make up for lost time when they do arrive," was the comment of his comrade.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised if they pay their visit a little earlier than the new watchman anticipates. This is a sleepy town, and eleven o'clock here counts the same as a couple of hours later in London, or up North."

"Yes, and they'll need a considerable time to finish the work. Not knowing the combination, they must use powder or dynamite."

"Not necessarily, I think. The safe you must remember is an old-fashioned one, and they'll probably bore through the outer door as though it were made of wood, for such adepts as they must be from what Warren told us are sure to be up to every dodge, and won't make any mistake."

"Except in not counting on our being here."

Both started from their chairs and stared questionably at each other. At that moment a heavy fall was heard in the outer room.

"H'sh!" whispered Bates, rising softly and gently opening the door. He went out on tiptoe, while Morton stationed himself by the partly-opened inner door so as to be ready to go to his companion's assistance the instant he was needed.

"Come here, Morton," Bates called in an undertone.

The other quickly joined his friend, who was shaking with laughter.

Warren's sleep could not have been dreamless, for he had rolled from the settee to the floor, where he mutteringly adjusted himself and resumed his slumber.

"We may as well let him lie where he is," said Bates, "though I meant at first to lift him back again."

"You might stand him on his head and he would continue to sleep. Leave him alone—H'sh!"

Someone had paused outside the building, as if about to enter. The policemen quietly hastened back to their former positions, on the alert for their visitors.

But it was a false alarm. The halt by the one outside meant nothing. He resumed his walk and passed on.

It was now half-past eleven, and the crisis could not be far off. Bates believed the criminals would not wait many minutes longer, for the streets were as deserted as they were likely to be for a full hour or more. Morton was inclined to think the superintendent was poking about, and had made a move to learn whether the officers were prepared; but Bates thought different. Such a course on his part would not be in keeping with his usual good sense.

But the long minute hand of the clock slowly climbed round the face until it reached the last quarter, where it seemed to stop. Then it struggled free and worked slowly upwards. But still the visitors came not.

Someone walked rapidly past the window, and all again became silent outside. The voice of a person calling to another, probably across the street, was heard, followed by the reply of the second one. The watchers might well have imagined they were in some deserted residence, miles out in the country, beyond the reach of any friendly or unfriendly callers.

The ticking of the clock grew louder than before. The men had ceased conversing and were listening. All at once the town clock began booming forth the hour of midnight, each stroke ringing out loud and clear on the still air. At the same moment a slight noise was heard in the outer room. Between the strokes it was so distinct that the watchers recognised its meaning.

Someone was working at the lock of the door.

The noise continued after the booming of the clock had ceased. It was so well defined that no mistake could be made as to its meaning.

"It's the burglars," whispered Morton; "they have come at last."

He spoke the truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two Shadowy Figures Passed up the Steps.

Strange as it may seem, both the detective and the watchman were more afraid of several other persons than of the men who they were certain had planned to rob the Middlewick Bank that evening. Not afraid in the usual sense of the term, but the two dreaded that their own friends, through over zeal, would disarrange the plans formed with so much care.

The one who caused the most misgiving was the bank manager, Mr. Bryant. He had visited the bank the previous evening at an unseasonable hour, and was liable to repeat the act. If he did so before the appearance of the criminals, they would keep out of the way and probably give up the job. If he called while they were at their work, he ran the risk of being murdered. How to prevent his repeating his visit was a delicate and difficult question.

"You must look out for him during the first half of the night, so that if he appears you can turn him back."

"On what pretext?" asked Taylor.

"On what pretext?" asked Taylor.

"He expressed himself satisfied last night with his inspection. You can manage to meet him while he is yet a good distance from the building, and say that if his new watchman finds himself under suspicion of incompetence after having received assurance to the contrary, he will be offended and leave his employ."

"Perhaps he will not care if he does."

"He will not want me to go in the night time, as you can assure him I will do if interfered with by him again."

Digitized by Google

"Suppose he takes a walk abroad and happens to meet you?"

"I will take good care that he doesn't do that, if you will only keep him away from the bank."

"What will he think when he learns that Warren is back at his old place?"

"He can't learn it before to-morrow, and then it will be easy to explain matters to him."

The other individuals who caused misgiving to Taylor and Burton were the police Superintendent and his policemen.

Respecting the latter, the question was as to their fitness to face the burglars; but, as that question must arise regarding whoever took their places, it caused less concern than the fear about the manager.

The Superintendent was certain to remain on the alert all night. He had informed the couple of his intention in that respect. Indeed, it would have been strange considering his position, if he had gone home to sleep knowing the town was to be racked by such an unprecedented earthquake within a few hours.

Whether he knew it or not the policeman spoke truly when he laughingly said he recognised the Superintendent's footsteps among those of the passers-by. It was not until he had passed the building for the third time that Burton met him at a safe distance and begged him to refrain, since, if he did not, the whole scheme would fall through. Superintendent Dixon was sensible enough to accept the protest, and did as requested.

It now began to look as if matters would be carried out according to programme. Mr. Bryant, as Burton believed, was under the eye of the detective, who would keep him at a distance. As it was still early, the new watchman had considerable leisure on his hands, so he concluded to visit the vicinity of Mr. Bryant's residence. The precise point where Taylor had agreed to keep his beat until half-past eleven had been settled, so that Burton knew where to look for him.

The locality was so retired that the friends could meet and compare notes without attracting attention. The watchman was especially desirous of seeing Taylor, as, since they had parted company, he had made a discovery with which the detective should be made acquainted at the earliest possible moment.

This was nothing less than the presence of a fourth member of the law-breakers, in the person of Bobby Roberts, who Burton supposed doing time in Portland to which he had been sentenced several years before. But here he was in Middlewick, and had therefore served out his imprisonment, and had been pardoned, or made his escape from gaol.

But a most unpleasant surprise awaited Burton at the lonely corner where the detective ought to have been idling his time. Neither he, nor anyone else was in sight, and though the watchman went over the entire beat he met only three strangers.

"This is extraordinary," he thought, with a thrill of misgiving.

It struck him as probable that his friend, in order to make sure the Manager did not escape him, had called at his house. It would never have done for Burton to show himself at "Glenmora" at an hour when duty required him to be at the bank. There was nothing, however, to prevent a reconnaissance by him.

Accordingly, he strolled past the handsome residence, scrutinising it from the opposite side of the street. It was wrapped in darkness; not a glimmer came from any portion. The owner was asleep, and Alfred Taylor was somewhere else.

Trying not to believe anything was amiss until he received proof of it, Burton now went back over the ground where his friend should have been. Not a glimpse of him was to be seen.

"It maybe he has made the same discovery as I and is looking for me," was the next thought of the watchman. "He knows where to find me."

All in vain. The detective was gone for the time, and the new watchman was at loss to understand it.

Burton's beat was a little way down the street at the opposite side of the corner of which the bank stood. No position could be more favourable, for by the aid of the moonlight and the street lamps, he not only had the front of the bank under his eye but could detect the approach of anyone, no matter from what direction he came.

He passed near the doorway where Burton stood.

A convenient doorway gave him all the shelter he needed, and the distance was so short that he could reach the bank within a few seconds after being summoned.

His first purpose was to locate Mr. Sam Birch, whom he was confident was to stand guard outside. If both he and Burton should happen to take the same vantage ground, an awkward complication was likely to follow; but he would not be likely to do that, for it would have been contrary to custom. He needed to be much nearer the bank, to give warning of the approach of danger and afford his confederates time to escape, or at least to cease their operations until the peril of discovery passed.

The town clock had just finished striking eleven when a figure came in sight which the watchman recognised as Sam Birch. He passed so near the doorway where Burton stood in the shadow that discovery seemed certain. Had it taken place it must have exerted a marked influence over what followed.

Had the criminal done his whole duty, he assuredly must have observed that shadowy form which once was within a few feet of him; but as he passed by, at a deliberate pace, his gaze remained fixed on the corner where stood the building to be plundered.

If any danger threatened, he expected it much nearer to the bank than was the watchman. So he went on, and *that* peril was over.

Never pausing to look back, Birch walked on, finally disappearing round the corner.

"He has found everything favourable," was the conclusion of the watchman, who was so well convinced that the burglary would not be attempted before midnight that he did not hesitate to leave his post.

Despite his certainty that a stirring encounter was imminent, Jack Burton was more disturbed at that moment because of the unaccountable absence of his friend Taylor than he was by the presence of the criminal quartette. Somehow he could not help associating the disappearance of the detective with the discovery of Roberts, the fourth member of the company.

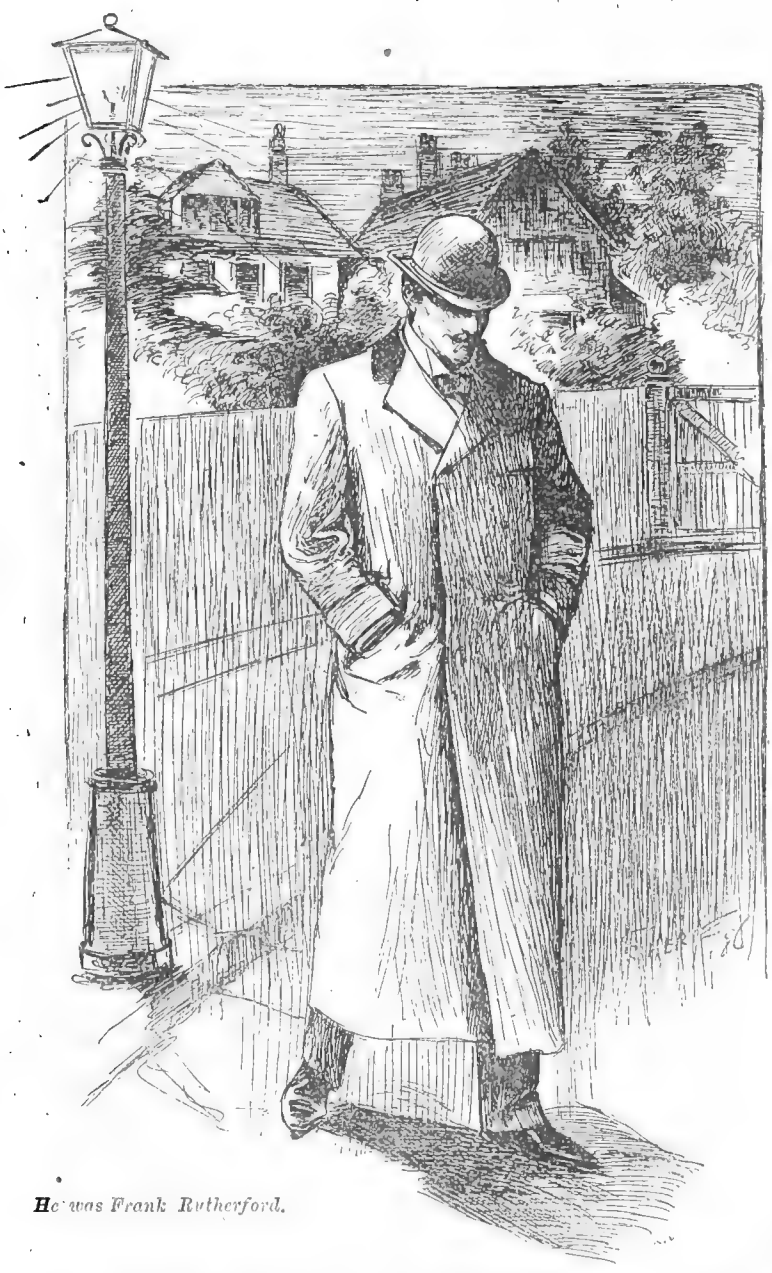
Moving out, therefore, from his hiding-place, the watchman walked quickly to the corner where Taylor had agreed to look out for Mr. Bryant. He was to remain there until half-past eleven, before it would be considered safe to leave the manager to himself.

It would be hard to picture the increased misgiving of the watchman when he learnt that his friend was still absent. Unquestionably he had not been at his post that evening.

"The pitcher can go to the well once too often," was Burton's melancholy conclusion; "but I hope it won't prove so in this case. One man more or less doesn't make much difference in the world, but Alf is too good a fellow to be spared. Where the deuce can he and Roberts be?"

Upon his return to his own station, Burton went over the

Digitized by Google



He was Frank Rutherford.

same ground as before, so that he passed Mr. Bryant's residence. It was still shrouded in darkness, as it had been for the last two hours.

The watchman had not been given as favourable an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the little town of Middlewick as had the detective. When, therefore, he observed a light shining from the upper room of a small building standing a little way back from the street he had no suspicion to whom it belonged.

The fact was noticeable because it was the only house in the immediate neighbourhood which showed that anyone was astir within. To one of Burton's observant nature the trifling fact had a meaning at this time which he would have liked to determine.

"Someone may be ill," he reflected, "but I believe that gas turned up to the highest point has something to do with the Middlewick Bank burglary or with the absence of Alfred Taylor."

Time was precious but he could not forbear lingering and watching for a few minutes.

The little street was so retired that the glare of the lamp and the light of the moon failed to show any person stirring; save for the presence of the watchman, the street was deserted.

But the conditions changed the next minute. Someone came round the corner from the direction of Mr. Bryant's home, walking quickly. The watchman resumed his progress, but so slowly that he was sure of being overtaken before going more than a few rods beyond the cottage in which the light was burning.

His hearing enabled him to locate the other person without looking round. The better to conceal his identity, Burton assumed a limp and raised one shoulder, taking care to do so before the other had a chance of noting the change.

Suddenly the sound of the footfalls on the pavement stopped. A backward glance instantly explained the cause. The man had left the flagstones, and was crossing the street diagonally. The soft earth failed to give back any sound.

He was the occupant of the house where the light was burning, and was making haste to reach his home.

The moonlight, and the glow of the lamp beneath which he passed, revealed the young man to the watchman. He was Frank Rutherford, the book-keeper of the Middlewick Bank.

"He doesn't keep good hours," was the natural thought of Burton; "but though it looks as if he was in the affair of the other night, I don't believe he's in this."

Rutherford hurriedly entered the house, ascended the stairs, and then, as his mother had done the preceding night, raised the curtain and looked out. He, too, seemed to be expecting someone who came not; but, in his case, he was looking for one whom he did not wish to see, while she had yearned for him.

The light fell so fully upon him that his face, shoulders, and the upper part of his body were clearly revealed. The watchman had made himself acquainted with the appearance of all the employés of the bank, so that the first glance identified the book-keeper.

"I don't wonder Bryant's niece is infatuated with him; he's handsome enough to turn the head of any girl."

Rutherford waited but a few minutes, little dreaming that anyone was observing him from the street below. Then down went the curtain, and in a brief while the light was turned out.

Burton glanced at his watch.

"Ten minutes to twelve!" he exclaimed. "I have no business here, but if I knew of any way to help poor Alf I would let the bank go, if the gang carried off the building itself."

There was no risk in walking quickly, and he hurried on until he reached the position he had vacated nearly half-an-hour before.

The most careful scrutiny of his surroundings failed to

Digitized by Google

show anything out of the usual course. But the change came quickly.

The people in the street were so few that it was easy to distinguish each as he came in sight. The figure of a tall man strolled past the bank, just as it had done earlier in the evening.

Sam Birch was taking his last survey, preparatory to signalling to his companions that the coast was clear.

To the astonishment of the watchman, the man, instead of turning to one side, as he had done before, came directly towards him.

"Confound it!" muttered Burton; "this means detection, without fail."

He would have slipped away had the chance been given, but to emerge from his shelter and hurry off would be the worst possible move he could have made. The suspicious criminal would know like a flash what it meant. All that Burton could do was to stay where he was and meet the crisis, as he had met many others.

The act of Birch puzzled the watchman, for it was contrary to the rules of procedure under such circumstances. His place was near the bank, where he could give timely notice to his confederates. While, as has already been shown, Burton's situation afforded this view, yet there was one direction from which he could not see a party approaching until he arrived within a few paces of the steps.

The professional detective and burglar take no chances that can be avoided by shrewdness and vigilance.

But, at the culmination of Burton's chagrin and exasperation, the wished-for change took place. Sam Birch was still several feet away when, like Frank Rutherford, he turned and crossed the street diagonally. Why this crossing of the street was made it would be difficult to explain, except upon the theory that the criminal detected something on the other side which he concluded to investigate.

The fact that he moved over a small space several times, where his actions were only dimly visible to the man shrinking in the shadows, favoured this explanation. He probably observed a likeness among the shadows which suggested a person, and Birch speedily discovered his error.

His next movement was more startling than any yet made.

Without the least warning, he came across the street, again making for the spot where Burton was striving to keep out of sight. Strange as it seemed to the watchman, his presence was still undiscovered. But the the miscreant was not expecting *him*, and therefore was not looking out for Burton.

Upon reaching the outer edge of the pavement, Birch turned on his heel and stood with his back to the watchman. Then he gave a low, guarded whistle.

He gave a low, guarded whistle.

At that moment the clock in the town hall began sounding the hour of midnight. The watchful Burton saw two shadowy figures pass up the steps of the bank and apply the key which they had ready. The door quickly opened, and they passed inside.

(To be continued.)

GRAND OFFER TO THE READERS OF SHORT STORIES.

WE offer for a period extending from the time this number is published until April 4th next a Beautiful Three-quarter Life-size India Ink and Crayon Portrait to anyone who will bring or send us only 6s. and one coupon from *Short Stories*, one coupon from *Pearson's Weekly*, and one from *The Story Teller*. These are the £100 coupons to be found on the cover in each paper. (The 2nd page in the case of *S. S.*)

These portraits are of the finest artistic merit. They are absolutely permanent, being finished by the Air Brush, with Indelible India Ink, making them more permanent than any of the old styles of portraits, and they will last a lifetime.

SHALL WE MAKE YOURS?

You will get an unheard-of bargain by availing yourself of this grand offer, and we are glad to be able to give it to you. We can copy from any photos, large or small, tin-types, or any kind of glass picture. In sending in the latter case care should be taken that they are properly packed. All pictures are copied bust style—head and shoulders only.

Again we make this Offer,
PROBABLY FOR THE LAST TIME.

DO NOT NEGLECT IT!
IT IS THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME.

These Pictures if ordered through Artists would cost you from 3 to 5 Guineas.

We made this same offer some months ago, and then 7,000 of our readers sent us photos to be enlarged. These enlargements have all been executed, and everybody appears to have been satisfied.

WHEN SENDING AN ORDER, inclose the picture you want copied in an envelope, and place your name and address on the back of the picture, and send the 6s. and the three coupons to these offices and you will receive the portrait copied for you as soon as possible. Have no fear of losing your small picture. It will be returned in as good order as received.

An Example of the Portrait we offer to give you can be seen at the offices of *Pearson's Weekly & Short Stories*.

DON'T PUT OFF SENDING. Obtain your coupons at once, and send in to us at once.
Address—PORTRAITS, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

ON HER TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY.

THEY were sitting in the parlour of Hope's home, and for about the twentieth time he had asked her to be his wife, and had been answered "No." Proposing had become a sort of habit with Fred, so instead of running away after being rejected, he stopped to talk the matter over. Hope's attempts at consolation were now part of the regular programme.

"I am awfully sorry, Fred," she said, "but you must not be unreasonable. I feel it would be sinful for me to give up the career that lies before me. I have looked forward to the day on which I shall be of age, and mean to exercise every prerogative it brings to me." (Fred groaned.) "But I don't want this unfortunate love of yours to make us any the less friends, for I really like you very much, and we have been chums so long."

She laid her hand on his shoulder and looked down at him kindly. The touch thrilled him, and he caught her hand tenderly.

"Why do you feel that you should have a career? Why not leave that sort of thing to women who have a grievance against the world?"

"I would rather do good work myself. But why am I arguing with you? You talk just like mamma about these things."

"Do you think that your mother's life has been thrown away?"

"Our cases are altogether different. She belongs to another phase of social development. The more advanced and emancipated woman, however, does not wish to be loved; she wishes to be appreciated."

"But I appreciate you."

"Nonsense. I have never done anything to be appreciated. Some day, perhaps, you will have a chance to appreciate me."

"Will you be my wife then?"

"Dear me," she said petulantly, "I object to being proposed to twice in the same evening."

"Well, then, what are you going to do? Going to join the Woman's Suffragists?"

"No. I believe in preserving one's individuality, and the field is so wide I know I can work without trespassing on the ground of any other woman. I have mapped out my lifework. If you will call to-morrow evening, I'll tell you. I shall be a free agent then, and privileged to speak and act for myself, for I shall be twenty-one years old."

"I would rather be coming to dance at a birthday party."

"You are unkind," she said; "but I must expect unkindness as I go on with my work," and a look of firmness settled on her face. It had taken her some time to decide whether or not a slight frown was necessary to a look of firmness, but she had come to the conclusion finally, that that virtue is best expressed by closely drawn lips and a placid brow. "I refused to let them give me one, for I did not wish to begin the first day of my new and broader life with frivolity. Instead, I may perhaps get some letters from a number of earnest women to whom I sent a little circular to-day outlining the work I propose to take up."

As Fred left the house, Hope's mother said: "I do believe that he proposed again to-night, and Hope rejected him."

"Isn't that the second time you have made that observation this week?" asked her husband.

"Well, it is a shame! He is such a splendid fellow."

"Tut! Tut! The child is just a little bit flighty now, and her talk of having a 'career' is amusing rather than serious. What great work does she intend doing?"

"She will not tell me, and I am afraid she may get into trouble."

"Never fear. I enjoy seeing her assert her rights, and I prophesy that a month of freedom from the parental *potestas* will satisfy her and make her the meekest girl in London. She has too much of her mother's goodness of heart to keep up her folly long."

The look he got in response spoke volumes—volumes of a kind not found in the libraries of emancipated women.

Hope rose early the next morning She felt that she was entering upon a new era, and her heart bounded at the thought of all that being of age must mean. Her parents had always been very kind, but they had kept her from taking part in any of the women's movements with which the city was seething—from making a fool of herself they said—but now she was of age, and could gently but firmly insist on getting the few rights that law and custom allow to women.

At breakfast Hope bore her father's teasing with a stately equanimity that amused him immensely. No, she would not tell them what her work was to be; but she probably would be able to do so in the evening, after getting some letters that she expected.

There was the suggestion of a sob in her mother's voice as she said:

"My little girl never had a secret from me before."

"Now don't look at it in that way, dear," said her

Digitized by Google

father. "Let Hope choose her own course, and if she gets into trouble she can blame no one but herself."

Hope went to her room, and, opening her dainty escritoire, tried to get her ideas into form on cream-laid paper.

Presently a maid brought up several cards. Hope read a couple:

MR. I. ROAST PERCOLLUM.
MR. S. JEROME SCORCH.

"Why," she exclaimed, "I don't know any of these people. What do they want? Where is Mamma?"

"They said it was you they wanted to see."

Then Hope remembered she was of age and decided to see them.

When she entered the drawing-room she found a group of young men looking at a painting on the wall.

"Magnificent," one of them was saying. "Notice the chiaroscuro. What an atmosphere! What——"

Her entry was noticed, and as the speaker turned to her she said:

"You wished to see me?"

The young men looked at the girl blankly.

"It is Miss Hope Ferd we wish to see," said the one who had been acting as art critic.

"That is my name."

"Perhaps there is a mistake," he said helplessly. "Haven't you a maiden aunt of the same name?"

"No."

He could hardly believe it possible. He expected to meet a severe old maid and this vision of girlish beauty staggered him, but he proceeded:

"I am Mr. Percollum of the *Evening Eclipse*, and my friends here——"

"Reporters!" gasped Hope, as she dropped into a convenient chair.

"Yes. We were calling on a prominent Woman's Suffragist this morning, and she told us she had received a letter from Miss Hope Ferd, who is organising a 'Society for the Purification of the Press.'"

"But," exclaimed Hope, "I didn't intend it to get into the papers."

"Yet a reform of that magnitude and character could hardly be achieved without the papers hearing of it sooner or later," he said, as he stole a sidelong look at Mr. Scorch of the *Evening Planet*.

Scorch fluttered his left eyelid encouragingly.

"That's so," said Hope. "I hadn't thought of that."

"We feel sure the public will be interested to know how you propose to accomplish this much-needed reform."

"Oh, horrors! I don't want to be interviewed."

"Many members of the press," interposed Scorch in terms as smooth as oil on the troubled waters, "will undoubtedly sympathise with you."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. The way the papers are now conducted is a source of sincere regret to many of us."

She looked at the young men a little dubiously, but they were such good-natured, respectable-looking fellows, she felt reassured.

"May I inquire what made you decide to undertake this work?"

"Well, to tell the truth," she said, "papa always cut out of the papers all that he thought unfit for a young lady to read, and I made up my mind that if so much was unfit, a reform was needed. Why, some days all he left for me was the editorial page."

"That was a hardship, indeed," said Percollum with a look of concern; "I don't wonder that you felt it necessary to do something. What is your plan of campaign? Will you lecture before the Press Club?"

"Dear me! That will not be necessary, will it?"

"Not absolutely necessary; but it is the usual way of proceeding in such matters."

"Oh, I couldn't think of that!"

"Well, will you direct your attention towards reforming the managing editors or the reporters? I think a great deal might be accomplished by individual work among the reporters."

"O, I don't know yet what I shall do. My plans are not fully matured."

Finding that no definite information could be got, Percollum and Scorch began to offer suggestions, to which she listened eagerly. When the interview was ended she felt very much encouraged, and was sure that reporters were a much maligned class.

Mrs. Ferd was horrified on hearing who her daughter's callers were, for she is one of those old-fashioned women who think a woman's name should never appear in the papers except at her birth, marriage and death. But Hope soothed her fears and assured her nothing would appear in the papers about it. And the reporters were really such nice young men, there could be no harm in having a chat with them.

Nothing further happened until about five o'clock, when there was a furious ring at the door-bell. A moment later Mr. Ferd was heard roaring:

"Where is that little idiot? Hope! Hope! Where are you? Hope!"

"What is the matter, papa?" she said in alarm, as she ran to him.

"Oh, that I should be the father of such an idiot! What did you mean by talking yards of drivelling lunacy to reporters?"

"Why, they haven't put anything in the papers, have they?"

"Haven't, eh? Look here! Columns of it! You have made us the laughing stock of the town."

"And they seemed such nice young men!" she murmured, sobbing.

"Reporters nice! Aw!" and flinging the bundle of evening papers to the floor, he rushed away to commune with his brandy bottle.

Picking up the papers. Hope fled to her room. The first she looked into contained this attractive heading to a two-column article:

HOPE IN THEIR HEARTS.

PRETTY MISS FERD ORGANISES A REFORM.

DEATH TO SENSATIONALISM.

THE HYDRA-HEADED PRESS TO BE GIVEN A HAIR-CUT AND SHAMPOO.

That was enough. She threw herself on the bed and cried as if her heart was broken. She wanted to die. When her mother came up a little later and put her arms about her, Hope hid her face in her bosom and they cried together. When the culprit grew quieter, Mrs. Ferd went away feeling almost happy. The bond that bound her daughter to her was stronger than ever. She was now prepared to act as Hope's champion, and protect her from the unrighteous indignation of her father.

Finally Hope's tears were exhausted, and she began to read what the papers said about her. As she read of paragraph after paragraph of ridicule and merciless sarcasm, her shame was only equalled by her rage.

Digitized by Google

She did not go down to dinner that evening, but when Fred's card was brought to her she hurried to the drawing-room. She did her best to look like an injured queen, yet when she saw that he was not going to laugh at her she felt a longing to hide her face on his shoulder and cry.

"You have often said that you love me," she began.

"You do not doubt that I meant it, do you?"

"Prove that you mean it by thrashing those reporters!"

"Thrashing them!"

"Yes, thrashing them!" and her rage returned. "I don't want to purify the press now! I want to annihilate it!"

"What are their names?"

"Here are their cards," and she sorted them from those on the card tray.

He took them in his hand and then hesitated. "But, what right have I to thrash them?"

"Have you not protested that you love me?"

"And you have always objected."

"I don't object now!" she murmured, half audibly.

A moment later she was sobbing on his shoulder.

The castigation of Percollum and Scorch was postponed for a couple of hours, during which the parental blessing was secured, and it was decided that Hope's twenty-first birthday should be remembered by her engagement rather than her folly. Fred finally remembered his commission, and said he must go and attend to it.

"No, no!" she cried. "You must not go and get into danger on account of my foolishness."

"Danger, nothing. You forget," he said expanding his chest, "that I was a half-back in our college football team! Danger? Nonsense!"

He looked so fine and manly and insisted so strongly that those reporters really deserved to have something done to them, she finally consented.

When he reached the street, after a peculiarly lingering farewell, he took the reporters' cards from his pocket and examined them carefully under a street lamp.

"Thrash them!" he chuckled. "Well, I guess not."

Two of the offenders were old college chums, so he sent a message to Percollum asking him to get together the fellows who were on the "Purification of the Press" assignment and join him at a Strand café. An hour later they met and set their faces resolutely towards the bar.

"Do you know her?" asked Percollum, as they fell in line.

"Sh-h-h-h! Name your poison."

Shortly after midnight the following note was posted to Hope:

My Darling.—Two of those reporters already used up. Several others badly disabled. May be exhausted myself, but hope to be sufficiently recovered by the afternoon to take you out for a drive.—Your devoted, Fred.

P. McArthur.

A STRANGE RESCUE.

Gun in hand I made my way through the tangled forest, eagerly searching for some specimens of a rare bird which I required to complete the collection I had formed of the feathered tribe since my arrival in Natal.

I had advanced a distance of a hundred or a hundred and twenty yards when I came upon a patch of "open," through which a narrow track led down to the edge of a small stream, which rippled musically over its pebbly bed. As I emerged from the thick undergrowth, an agonised moan reached my ear, and at the same instant my eye fell upon a magnificent full-grown male leopard, beautifully marked, which lay doubled up in the track, in an attitude unmistakably suggestive of acute pain.

The instinct of the sportsman instantly prompted me to raise my gun to my shoulder—to lower it again, however, the next instant. It was loaded with small shot only—too small, indeed, to penetrate the hide of the splendid creature before me; and it seemed, too, a cowardly act to take advantage of him in his helpless and suffering condition.

His eyes looked glazed and dim; his tongue, white furred and dry, hung out of his mouth, and his sides heaved painfully at every inspiration.

As I emerged from the bush, he lifted up his head and regarded me with an expression as distinctly appealing as anything I have ever yet seen, while, slightly raising his forepaw, he uttered another groan. This action attracted my attention, as I at once observed that the foot was frightfully swollen.

I can scarcely even now account for the impulse which caused me to walk quietly up to the suffering animal. It was evident the moment I approached him that part of his sufferings proceeded from thirst, aggravated intensely, no doubt, by the sight of the water which he had striven unavailingly to reach. Seeing this, I went down to the brook, and filled my pith helmet with the cool, sparkling liquid, and offered it him.

He lapped it greedily, and seemed so plainly to ask for more that I at once fetched it, and this, too, disappeared.

He now seemed much better and attempted to rise, but sank upon the ground again with a horrid howl, the moment his swollen foot touched the earth.

I allowed him to remain undisturbed for a minute or two, and then gently took his paw in my hand, to examine it: my patient, as I may now call him, offering me no resistance beyond a faint whine. I saw at once that the poor brute was suffering from a very large and painful gathering in the ball of the foot, and that it would afford him immediate relief to have it opened.

Digitized by Google

But how would he be inclined to behave under the operation? I asked myself. The chances were that the pain would arouse him to a pitch of ungovernable fury, in which case I should stand but a poor chance in a struggle with him.

While I was hesitating as to whether I should run the risk or not, he again looked up into my face with such a pitiful beseeching expression that it was simply irresistible.

I drew out my knife—which I always kept as keen as a razor—and, without further ado, drove the point into the skin, making at the same moment, by a quick jerk of the hand, an incision about three inches long.

The splendid fellow never so much as winced. Beyond a deep moan, he showed no sign of having felt the slightest pain; and I shall always feel fully convinced that he knew I was doing him a service.

Matter and blood flowed copiously from the opening I had made in the skin, and in the course of two or three minutes it became evident that the poor brute had experienced very great relief.

I made another incision across the first one, and then very gently pressed the swollen part until the discharge had entirely ceased.

I then got more water, and fortunately provided with abundance of soft linen (which I used to wrap my birds in after I had shot them, to preserve their plumage unruffled) set to work to bathe and wash the foot thoroughly, after which I made a poultice of some healing leaves, and bound it securely over the puncture, the poor creature affectionately licking my hands all the while.

I then gave him a little more water to drink, and left him.

A few days later I was making my way to the patch of "open" where I had played the part of surgeon, with a leopard for my patient.

I spent a considerable amount of time in pinning and adjusting the plumage of my birds, when—I did not know why—I felt irresistibly constrained to turn my eyes towards the stump of a fallen tree. Obeying the impulse I took a good look at it, and, as I did so, became conscious of two bright, sparkling objects, glittering in the deep shadow of one of its projections.

Vaguely wondering what these could be, I remained steadfastly regarding them; and, as I did so, a very peculiar sensation stole over me. A slight and intermittent shivering seized my frame, accompanied by a momentary feeling of giddiness and nausea; all surrounding objects appeared to reel and swim out of my range of vision, leaving nothing but those two glittering points, which now appeared to expand into orbs of brilliant light.

A singing in the ears became perceptible, and, blending with the sighing of the wind through the foliage—which sounded faint and distant—quickly assumed a tone of dulcet, soothing, and delicious harmony of a distinctly rhythmical character, following the cadences of which the dazzling orbs appeared to sway gracefully before me, growing larger and more intensely brilliant every moment; and now they appeared to be surrounded with waving lines of delicate green and creamy pink, which interlaced in endless confusion of graceful flowing curves with a rapidity which made my brain reel.

More and more rapid became the movement of brilliant colour before me, more and more dazzling the shining orbs upon which I looked, until it seemed to me that I was a mere point in infinity; that heaven and earth had passed away, and that nothing remained, but those two brilliant suns, surrounded by a universe of waving green and pink lines.

Then came a sudden darkness—a shock as of electricity—a confused buzzing noise in my brain, which commenced to throb as though it would burst my skull—and a sensation of extreme giddiness which passed away as rapidly as it had come; and I found myself staring stupidly at a magnificent leopard—my former patient, as I saw at once by the remains of the bandage on his foot—who was standing growling savagely over an immense green mamba (a deadly venomous snake) who lay writhing with a broken back upon the grass, vainly trying to strike his poison fangs into the paw which, with extended talons, was dashing the reptile, more maimed and mutilated at every stroke, into the earth.

The tragedy was soon over: but I have no idea how long I might have remained seated there, staring vacantly and confusedly at my preserver, had I not at length been aroused by his approach. Then it suddenly dawned upon me that I might be his next victim; but he speedily set that fear at rest by rubbing himself against me, thrusting his head under my hand, and walking his whole length backwards and forwards, causing my hand to traverse his back until it reached his perpendicularly elevated tail and purring loudly with pleasure all the while, like an immense cat—as, of course, he was.

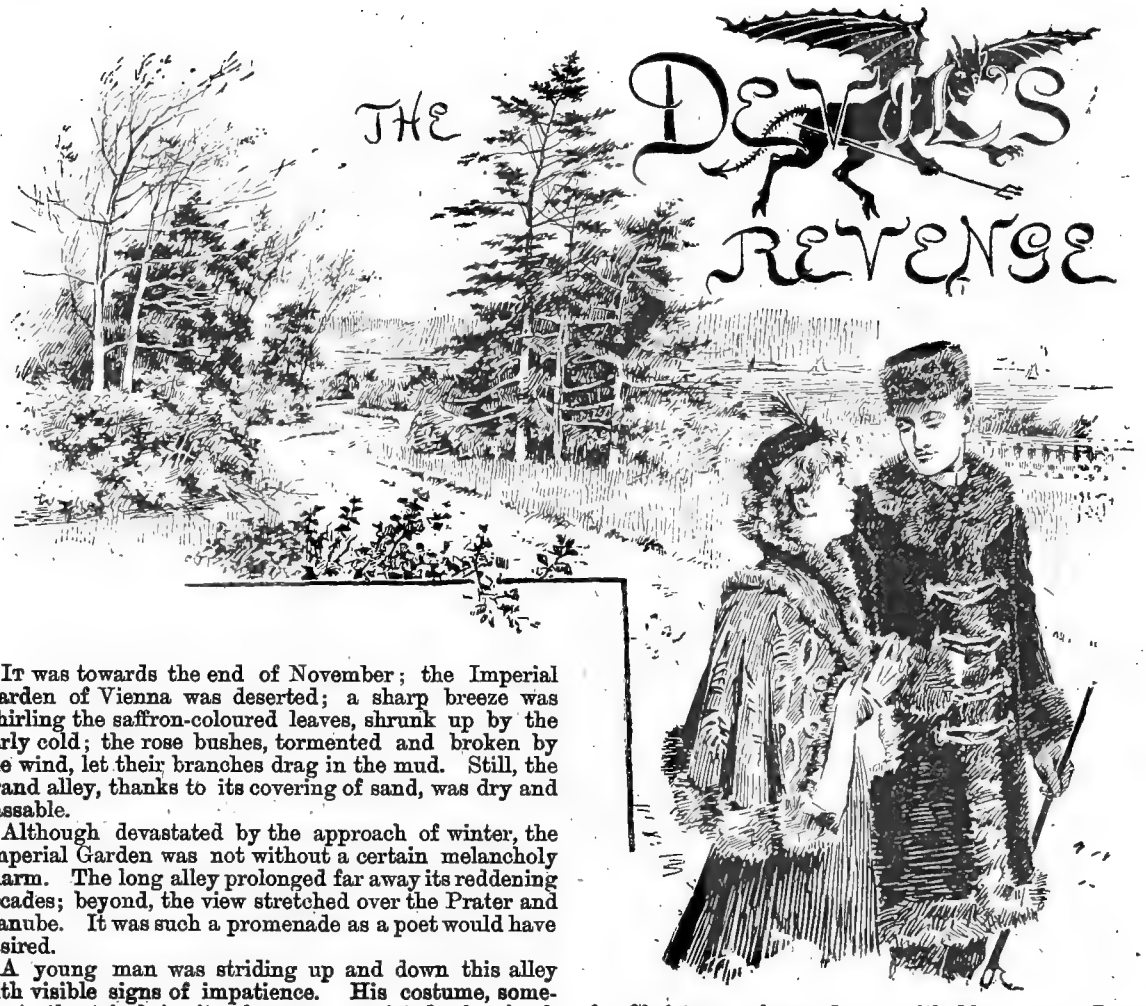
When the first eager manifestation of his delight had somewhat subsided, and I had soothed him into a state of tranquility, I examined his foot once more, washed it again—he followed me to the river when I walked down to its margin for water—and put a fresh dressing upon it.

Then I packed up my birds, examined the body of the snake, whose powers of fascination I had so fully, though unwillingly proved, and took my way homeward, accompanied to the extreme edge of the bush by my strange friend, who then for a minute or two followed me with his eyes, his tail waving gently to and fro the while, until he apparently realised the fact that I was actually leaving him, when he crouched low down on the ground, placed his head between his forepaws, raised a dismal howl, and finally started up and bounded back into the bush.

I never saw him again. H. Rogers.

Digitized by Google

THE DEVIL'S REVENGE



It was towards the end of November; the Imperial Garden of Vienna was deserted; a sharp breeze was whirling the saffron-coloured leaves, shrunk up by the early cold; the rose bushes, tormented and broken by the wind, let their branches drag in the mud. Still, the grand alley, thanks to its covering of sand, was dry and passable.

Although devastated by the approach of winter, the Imperial Garden was not without a certain melancholy charm. The long alley prolonged far away its reddening arcades; beyond, the view stretched over the Prater and Danube. It was such a promenade as a poet would have desired.

A young man was striding up and down this alley with visible signs of impatience. His costume, somewhat theatrical in its elegance, consisted of a frock coat of black velvet, with gold facings and bordered with fur, grey woollen pantaloons, top boots, with tassels, coming half way up his legs. He might have been twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age. His pale and regular features were full of *finesse*, and irony lurked in the creases round his eyes and the corners of his mouth.

The narrow limits within which he circumscribed his walk showed that he was waiting for someone—probably a lady, for the Imperial Garden of Vienna in the month of November is hardly propitious to business rendezvous. Soon a young girl appeared at the end of the avenue. A turban of black silk covered her rich blonde hair, whose ringlets had been slightly uncurled by the dampness of the evening; her complexion, ordinarily of waxen whiteness, had taken a rosy tint from the bite of the cold. Grouped and wrapped, she was in a mantle trimmed with marten skin; a little terrier accompanied her—a convenient chaperon, on whose indulgence and discretion you could count.

"Imagine, Heinrich," said the pretty Viennese, taking the young man's arm. "I have been dressed and ready to go out for more than an hour, and my aunt kept on with her sermons on the dangers of waltzing, on recipes for Christmas cakes and carp with blue sauce. I went out on the pretext of buying some grey boots, of which I have no need whatever. It is for you, Heinrich, that I tell all these little lies which I am constantly regretting and constantly beginning over again. What an idea it was of yours to take to the stage! What was the good of studying theology so long at Heidelberg? My parents liked you, and we might have been married to-day but for that. Instead of meeting on the sly under the bare trees of the Imperial Garden, we should be seated side by side before a fine porcelain stove in a nice, warm room, talking of the future. Would not that be a happy lot, Heinrich?"

"Yes, Katie, very happy," replied the young man, as he pressed, under the satin and fur, the dimpled arm of the pretty Viennese; "but I cannot help it. The theatre attracts me invincibly; I dream of it by day, I think of it by night; I feel the desire to live in the creation of the poets. I seem to have twenty existences. Every *rôle* that I play makes me a new life; all those passions that I express I feel. I am Hamlet, Othello, Romeo. When one is all that he can with difficulty resign himself to the humble condition of a village pastor."

"That is very noble. But you know that my parents never will have an actor for a son-in-law."

Google

"No, certainly not an obscure actor; a poor, ambulant artist, the puppet of managers and the public. But a great actor, covered with glory and applause, who earns more money than a minister, they will not refuse, however scrupulous they may be. When I shall come to ask your hand in a handsome coach, the varnish of which will be able to serve as a looking-glass for the astonished neighbours, and a tall lackey with gold lace will let down the steps for me, do you think they will refuse me?"

"I do not think they will. But who says, Heinrich, that you will ever come to that? You have talent, but talent is not sufficient; you must have good luck besides. By the time that you shall have become the grand actor of whom you speak, the best of your youth will have passed, and then will you be ready to marry Katie, grown old, when you have at your disposal the loves of all those princesses of the theatre, who are so joyous and so gaily decked?"

"That future," replied Heinrich, "is nearer than you think. I have an advantageous engagement at the theatre of the Corinthian Gate, and the manager is so satisfied with the manner in which I played my last *rôle* that he has made me a present of two thousand thalers."

"Yes," replied the young girl with a serious air, "that *rôle* of a demon in the new piece. I confess to you, Heinrich, that I do not like to see a Christian assume the mask of the enemy of the human race, and pronounce words of blasphemy. The other day I went to see you at the Corinthian Theatre, and at every moment I was afraid that a veritable fire would issue from one of the traps where you were swallowed up in flames of spirits of wine. I returned home all confused, and I dreamed horrible dreams."

"My good Katie, that is all imagination; to-morrow, too, will take place the last performance, and I shall no longer put on the black and red costume which so much displeases you."

While they were talking thus the two lovers had arrived at the Thaborstrasse, in the Leopoldstadt, in front of the shoemaker who was famous for the perfection of his grey boots. After chatting some time at the door, Katie entered, followed by her terrier, but not without having abandoned her pretty, slender fingers to the pressure of Heinrich's hand.

* * *

That night there was a numerous company at the Two-headed Eagle, the guests were of the most mixed description. The Two-headed Eagle was one of those blessed cellars celebrated by Hoffman, with steps so worn, so greasy, so slippery, that you cannot put your foot upon the first one without at once finding yourself at the bottom, with your elbows on the table, a pipe in your mouth, between a pot of beer and a measure of new wine.

Everybody was eating and drinking; the drink consisted of strong beer and a mixture of new red wine with old white wine; the food, of slices of cold veal, ham, or pastry.

Round the tables couples turned unceasingly one of those long German waltzes, which produce upon northern imaginations the same effect as hashish and opium on the Orientals; the couples passed and repassed rapidly; the women, almost fainting with pleasure on the arms of their cavaliers to the sounds of a waltz, swept away with their skirts the clouds of smoke and refreshed the faces of the drinkers.

Heinrich went to the end of the cellar, and sat on a table where were already seated three or four personages of joyous mien and merry humour.

"Ah, Heinrich!" cried the eldest of the band. "You know you had a truly diabolical look the other night; you almost frightened me. Who would think that Heinrich, who drinks beer as we do, and who does not draw back before a slice of cold ham, could put on such venomous, wicked, and sardonic airs, and that with a single gesture he can make a whole theatre shudder?"

"Eh! why that is the reason Heinrich is a great artist, a sublime comedian. There is no glory in playing a *rôle* that is in your character; the triumph, for a coquette, is to excel in playing *ingénues*. Don't you agree with me?"

Heinrich sat down modestly, called for a large glass

Pushed him by main force through the floor.

Digitized by Google

of mixed wine, and the conversation continued on the same subject. On all sides it was admiration and compliments.

"Ah, if the great Wolfgang Goethe had seen you!" said one.

"Show us your feet," said another. "I am sure you have a forked hoof."

The other drinkers, attracted by these exclamations, looked at Heinrich seriously, all happy to have the opportunity of examining closely so remarkable a man. The young man who had formerly known Heinrich at the university, and whose names he hardly knew, came up to him and shook him cordially by the hand, as if they had been his intimate friends.

One man only, seated at a neighbouring table, seemed to take no part in the general enthusiasm. His head thrown backward, he was thrumming distractedly with his fingers on the crown of his hat a military march, and from time to time he uttered a sort of humph, singularly dubious.

The aspect of this man was of the strangest, although he was dressed like an honest burgher of Vienna, enjoying a modest fortune; his grey eyes were shaded with green tints, and shot out phosphoric lights like the eyes of a cat. When his pale, flat lips parted, they showed two rows of teeth very white, very sharp, and very wide apart, of the most cannibal and ferocious aspect; his long nails, shining and curved, took a vague appearance of claws; but that physiognomy appeared only by rapid flashes; to the eye that watched him fixedly, his face resumed the *bourgeois* and *débonnaire* appearance of a retired Viennese merchant, and you felt astonished that you could have suspected of villainy a face so vulgar and trivial.

Internally Heinrich was shocked at the indifference of the man. That disdainful silence took away their value from the panegyrics which his noisy companions lavished upon him. It was the silence of an old and experienced connoisseur, who does not allow himself to be deceived by appearances.

Atmayer, the youngest of the company, the warmest admirer of Heinrich, could not endure this coldness, and addressing the strange man, as if taking him to bear witness to an assertion that he advanced, he said:

"Is it not so, sir, no actor has ever played the *rôle* of Mephistopheles better than my comrade here!"

"Humph!" said the stranger, flashing his green eye and cracking his sharp teeth. "Mr. Heinrich is a young man of talent, whom I esteem very highly; but he is wanting in many things necessary to play the *rôle* of the devil."

And suddenly drawing himself up: "Have you ever seen the devil, Mr. Heinrich?"

He put this question in such a strange and mocking tone that all the company felt a shudder run down their backs.

"That, however, would be necessary for the truthfulness of your play. The other evening I was at the theatre of the Corinthian Gate, and I was not satisfied with your laugh; it was, at the utmost, a sly laugh. My dear Mr. Heinrich, this is the way you ought to laugh."

And thereupon, as if to give him the example, he burst into a laugh, so sharp, so strident, so sardonic, that the orchestra and the dancers stopped at that very instant, and the glass in the windows trembled. The stranger continued this pitiless and convulsive laughter for several minutes, and Heinrich and his companions, in spite of their terror, could not help imitating it.

When Heinrich had recovered himself, the vaults of the tavern were repeating, like a feeble echo, the last notes of that broken and terrible laugh, and the stranger was no longer there.

* * * * *

Some days after this strange incident, which he had almost forgotten, or which he remembered only as a joke of an ironical burgher, Heinrich was playing his part of the demon in the new piece. On the first row of seats in the orchestra was seated the stranger of the tavern, and at every word pronounced he shook his head, winked

Then he entered upon the scene . . . like a perfect actor.

Digitized by Google

his eyes, smacked his tongue against his palate, and showed signs of the liveliest impatience.

"Bad, bad!" he murmured to himself.

His neighbours, astonished and shocked at his manners, applauded, and thought to themselves that the old gentleman was very hard to please.

At the end of the first act the stranger rose as if he had taken a sudden resolution, strode over the big drum, the cymbals, and trombone, and disappeared through the little door that leads from the orchestra to the stage. Heinrich, waiting until the curtain rose, was walking up and down in the wings, and when he came to the end of his short promenade, what was his terror to see, as he turned, standing in the middle of the narrow corridor, a mysterious personage clothed exactly as he was, and who looked at him with eyes whose greenish transparency had a strange profoundity in the darkness; the white, wide-set teeth gave something ferocious to the sardonic smile.

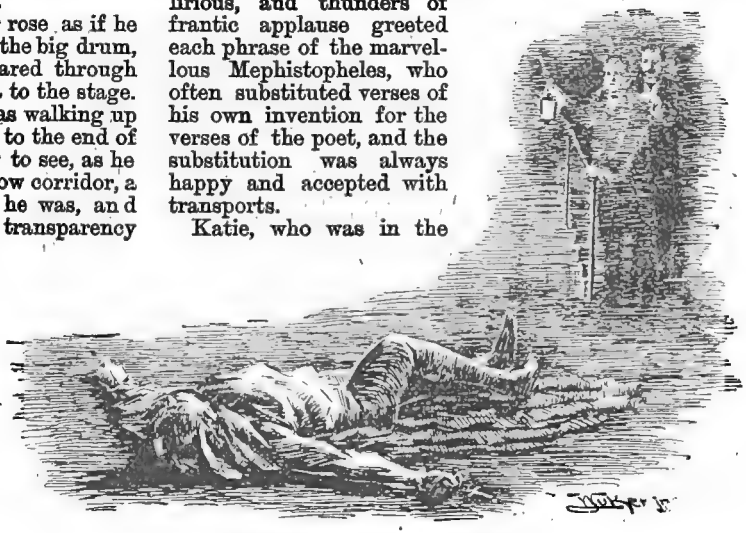
Heinrich could not fail to recognise the stranger whom he had seen at the Two-headed Eagle, or rather the devil in person, for it was he.

"Ah, ah, my young friend! You wish to play the devil? You were very middling in the first act, and you would decidedly give a very poor idea of me to the good citizens of Vienna. You will allow me to replace you this evening; and, as you might interfere with me, I will send you to the cellar below the stage."

Heinrich recognised the Prince of Darkness, and felt himself lost. Putting his hand mechanically to the little cross that Katie had given him, he tried to call for help, and to murmur his formula of exorcism; but terror choked him; he could only utter a feeble rattle. The devil seized Heinrich with his hooked hand by the shoulders, and pushed him by main force through the floor. Then he entered upon the scene, when his cue came, like a perfect actor.

His incisive, biting, venomous and truly diabolic acting at first surprised the spectators. What especially produced a great effect was that sharp titter like the grating of a saw—that laugh of the lost blaspheming the joys of paradise. Never had an actor attained such power of sarcasm, such a depth of villainy; the audience laughed, but they trembled. All the audience was panting with emotion, phosphoric sparks glinted from the fingers of the terrible actor, trains of sparkling flame ran from his feet, the footlights shot out reddish and greenish flashes, a sort of sulphurous smell reigned in the theatre, the spectators were, as it were, delirious, and thunders of frantic applause greeted each phrase of the marvellous Mephistopheles, who often substituted verses of his own invention for the verses of the poet, and the substitution was always happy and accepted with transports.

Katie, who was in the theatre, was in a state of extraordinary alarm; she did not recognise her dear Heinrich, she presaged some misfortune with that spirit of divination which love gives.



Heinrich Falkenstein was dead.

The performance ended amidst indescribable enthusiasm. When the curtain fell the public called for Mephistopheles with loud cries. He was sought for in vain, but at last a scene-shifter came and told the manager that Heinrich had been found in the cellar, where he had probably fallen through a trap.

The hapless actor was taken up. His clothing was burned in places, and on his shoulders were deep scratches. They spoke to him, but he did not answer.

Heinrich Falkenstein was dead.

Le Vier.

No. 2 of "Melody"

AND

"Pearson's Magazine" No. 4

ARE NOW ON SALE. PRICE 6d. EACH.

"Melody" provides Songs, Dances, Pianoforte Compositions at ½d. each.

"The Magazine" provides delightful Stories and Articles and Plentiful Illustrations at the rate of ½d. for Ten Pages.

Digitized by Google

Diamond ✣ Cut ✣ Diamond.

My house at Kensington had twice been robbed to a small extent.

The first time the burglars only got a few silver-plated spoons, that had been used by the servants. The second time the linen and half a cold turkey were taken from the kitchen. On hearing of this depredation I made the following mental note: "The next time my house is burgled I am going to try a little experiment—whether I can catch the burglar."

One night, in the dead of winter, I walked home from the theatre. I was a bachelor, and had no servants sleeping in the house, but my mind was cheered as I approached the dwelling by the thought that its time of lonesomeness and my bachelor days were soon to be brought to an end and by the best girl in the world.

I sat down before the fire which my caretaker had built up before leaving, removed my shoes, put on my slippers, and picked up a novel. After half-an-hour's reading I became aware that I was quite hungry, so I laid my book aside and marched downstairs. I remembered that I was singing an air from a once popular opera:

> When the energetic burglar's not a-burgling,
> When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
> He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,
> And to listen to the merry village chime.

II.

It was not because I had any thought of housebreakers that I sang that song, but it had always given me a sense of restfulness from the turmoils of life. I had, on finishing the verse, reached the end of the hall, and opened the dining-room door very abruptly, when I started to find myself in the glare of a bull's-eye lantern held by an invisible hand, and to hear a gruff voice say:

"Show us yer hands!"

Just at my left on the wall was a little metallic knob which I had only to press to flood the room with light from incandescent burners. Now I am of a peculiarly perverse temperament. From childhood I have felt an irresistible inclination to do the very opposite from what I have been told, regardless of consequences, and I therefore claim no credit for nerve for disobeying the command to show my hands, though I knew I was confronted by a desperate man, who probably had a revolver in his hand. I deliberately pressed the little knob. Instantly the bull's-eye grew red and sullen in the bright electric glow.

Across the table, standing by the sideboard, was the most repulsive looking ruffian I ever saw. His thick, bushy hair almost covered his receding forehead, and a few locks fell over his small black eyes. His neck was very thick and his complexion very bad. But the most alarming feature was his mouth. In all my twenty-nine years I had never seen such a cavern in a human face. It seemed to yawn like an abyss when he opened it.

"Hold up your hands, young feller," he repeated, "an' no monkeyin'."

"Heavens! what a mouth!" I exclaimed.

This irrelevant remark seemed to surprise him, for he only stared in silence for a moment.

"Come now," he again said, "no foolin'. Put up yer dukes over your head, or I'll bore ye through."

"Pardon me for refusing your request," I replied, "but my position would be a very uncomfortable one. Besides, I think your tone is impertinent."

This maddened the fellow. He placed his lantern on the sideboard and came round the table.

"See here, young feller," he said, grasping me by the wrist and staring into my face, while he clutched the revolver in the other hand, "I told ye I didn't want no monkeyin'."

"If I had a mouth like yours," I replied, "and if I could supply it with plenty of bread and bacon I would live 200 years—certain."

The burglar replied to this with a profane remark, and at once examined all my pockets to see that I had no revolver. "Thunder!" he said on finding that I had not. "You hain't got no arms. I could eat a dozen like you."

"I've no doubt of it," I replied.

He took my watch and purse from me and put them in his own pocket.

"You'll find that a good watch," I said, "and the cash in that book is legal tender anywhere."

"Be careful you don't make no noise," he said. "Us poor fellows has got to make our livin' off blokes like you, an' we don' get nabbed any more'n we kin help, you betcher life, not even if we has to plug somebody; so keep mum an' don't say a word."

III.

"Now see here," said I in a very business-like manner, "let us understand each other. You are robbing my house. That's all right. I'm used to it. Only I determined that the next time one of your calling invaded my premises I would try a little experiment."

"Huh?" he asked.

"I determined," I repeated, "to try a little experiment."

"Swag is what I want, not experiments," replied my guest.

"That is all right," I replied, "you may have the swag. I will have the experiment. In fact, it is a part of my experiment that you shall have the swag."

"Good enough," said he. "An' what's the rest of it?"

"I will explain that to you later," I replied. "I see you have been investigating the sideboard. Well, there is plenty of solid silver there. It won't be quite so valuable melted down, but then I won't be able to recognise it at your uncle's or elsewhere. Get to work now. Put it all out on the table, wrap it in napkins, and the whole in a tablecloth."

Mr. Burglar looked on me with the most marked surprise. He evidently concluded that I was a lunatic.

I drew a big chair up to the grate, stirred up the dying

Digitized by Google

fire, put on more coal, and with my feet on the fender prepared to enjoy my ease. Mr. Burglar spent more time watching me than in ransacking the sideboard. He seemed to think that I would suddenly seize a pistol from some hiding place and pepper him. But I didn't. I only sat still and talked to him in a facetious manner about various matters, particularly politics and burglary.

We passed many pleasantries, and he was now coming to think me a very interesting lunatic.

"I reckon I've got it all," he said at length, lifting the heavy burden; "an' I must say you're the queerest cove I ever seen."

IV.

"Well," I said, "I know of nothing else in the house that I should be willing for you to take away, and I will proceed to do what I came down here for—that is, to take supper. If I had not been hungry I should not have the pleasure of making your acquaintance. Do you like cold turkey? Come along with me."

I went into the kitchen, turned on the incandescent lights and entered the pantry, Mr. Burglar watching me closely and nervously, ready to shoot me if I picked up a weapon in any unexpected place. I took no notice of his actions, and, perfectly unconcerned, I found some cold turkey, some celery, a few slices of bread, and some butter. I put them all on a tray and went back to the dining-room table with them, Mr. Burglar following as vigilant as ever.

"Help yourself," I said, giving him a plate, knife and fork. "Have some turkey. That celery is very fine. And this bread is unsurpassed. Now make yourself at home." We did not sit down but stood together by the table.

My guest was somewhat embarrassed to know how to eat his turkey and at the same time hold his revolver. He compromised by transferring the latter to his left hand and taking up a slice of fowl with his right, "I don't belong to the haristocracy," he said, "an' I reckon I'll eat with my fingers."

We ate in silence for a few moments, when I said in a tone of chiding for my forgetfulness: "Well I have forgotten the wine. You'll say it is the best you ever drunk."

"You hain't got no gin, I reckon?" said the burglar, with his mouth full of turkey.

"No," I replied, reaching a large decanter full of ruby liquid down from the sideboard; "I don't keep it, but try this."

I placed the decanter by him and set out two ordinary tumblers. He looked at me very straight for a moment, then poured the glass nearly full and raised it to his cavern mouth. It pleased him. He almost closed his eyes in his contentment.

My time had come. With a movement like lightning I gave him a stunning blow just under the ear with a fist that had felled more than one man in the gymnasium. His head struck the fender as he fell and I was on him in a second. I wrenched the revolver from his hand, arose, laid it on the table, and calmly finished my luncheon. When the burglar sat up and rubbed his head in a dazed way, I had resumed my seat by the fire. But the tables were turned—I had the revolver.

"Now," I said, "I am going to show you the other part of that experiment. First, you untie that tablecloth and put the silver and napkins back in the sideboard as you found them." He eyed me sullenly and obeyed.

V.

When he had finished I said: "Lest your curiosity as to the nature of my experiment be devouring you I will tell you at once that it is this: Instead of letting you go away with my valuables, I am going to take all yours. Do you see? I am going to burgle the burglar. Take off your coat and throw it to me." The burglar obeyed. His face was black as a thundercloud.

"Now your vest," I commanded.

He hesitated.

"Be quick," I said, tapping the revolver, and he sullenly complied.

"Now your trousers," I continued.

He looked at me with an expression almost piteous. I raised the revolver to the level of his head and said: "Off with them," and off they came.

Mr. Burglar now stood before me in rather meagre undergarments, the very picture of helpless rage. He gritted his teeth and clenched his hands in the most savage manner, and the expression of his cave-like mouth was something terrible.

"Don't be unduly agitated," I said in soft tones. "This is all of my experiment. I will now let you go out by the kitchen door, and remember that I am satisfied with having robbed you of your clothing and whatever may be in your pockets. I will not appear against you in court under any circumstances. You are free."

I found the kitchen door unlocked when we reached it. He had come in that way. I sent the despoiled burglar out into the wintry air shivering, locked the house more securely, took his clothes, and went away to my room.

VI.

In addition to my watch and money, I found in the burglar's pockets some gold and notes. "Surely my experiment has been a success," I said aloud. "How Ida will laugh when I tell her my adventure. Bless her heart!" And, thinking of the dear girl, I took from a drawer in my dressing-room a beautiful plush case. It contained a set of diamonds I had bought for Ida for a wedding present. They had cost me £400, and I looked at them every night as they glistened beautifully. I opened the case and held it under the light.

Never in all my life had I such feelings as I had that moment. The case was empty—the stones were gone.

I understood it all. The burglar had been wandering over the house before I came home. He had been to my room. Had even lit the gas. Yes, he had taken Ida's diamonds. I searched the clothes again. They did not contain the missing jewels. Could he have carried them off in his hands or in his socks? I rushed downstairs, out of the kitchen door, and searched the adjacent yards, streets, and alleys in vain. I met a policeman. No, he had seen nothing of a man with a big mouth, walking abroad in his underclothes.

I returned home at daybreak, baffled, sick at heart. Under the door I found a note written by an untrained hand. It read thus:

Dear sir i take my pen to Let you no i didnt kech cold I had already throw a suit of yore close out of the kitchen dore they was a little small but bettern mine i reckon you found yore Dimons missin i put them in my heavens what a mouth when you made me take of my dudds i aint afeard youl ketch me. You said you wouldn prosecut me under no circumstanses and i reckon a gent like you will keep yore word, you aint so smart tho as you can think you are.

And that is what I have been thinking ever since.

Agnes Jewly.

Digitized by Google

A MUTE REPLY.

Reginald (very much in love, and having manœuvred for this opportunity): "We need not walk so fast, Miss Ethel, there will be plenty of time to reach the station, and the road is so delightful, don't you think?"

Ethel (brightly): "Oh, delightful, really!"

Reginald (anxiously): "Perhaps you would have preferred to ride with the others?"

Ethel: "No, indeed. I am fonder of walking than riding, aren't you?"

Reginald (enthusiastically): "Oh, yes, especially with—with a person who enjoys it. If I could only stay longer, we might plan some glorious walks about here—that is, if you would care to share them with me."

Ethel (sweetly): "It would delight me—and I am sure auntie would love to go with us! She is a famous pedestrian."

Reginald: "Yes (with a sigh). It does seem hard that I am compelled to leave just now, but father being ill makes it imperative. I simply *must* go. And these last few weeks have been to me a glimpse of Paradise!"

Ethel (smiling dreamily): "You feel like a banished Adam, I suppose?"

Reginald (softly): "A good deal worse. Eve went with *him*, you know."

Ethel: "Yes, poor Eve! Imagine how he must have scolded her along the way."

Reginald: "Oh, *I* imagine they walked out quite hopefully, hand in hand, to seek their fortune."

Ethel: "Poor girl. It is bad enough to seek one's fortune *now*. But in those days there could not possibly have been any fortunes to be found."

Reginald: "Oh, they got along. So do lots of couples that—that love each other (glancing down at her tenderly). I know *I* would not be afraid to take long odds against Fate, if I could have the woman of my heart beside me always."

Ethel: "Perhaps not, but *she* might be afraid."

Reginald (rather disconcerted): "Well, I don't know. She would not be—er—ah—if she returned my affection. (Bravely) Shall you be coming up to town soon, do you think?"

Ethel: "To town? Oh, no."

(A long silence. Reginald switches viciously with his stick at the inoffensive wayside growths, and stares gloomily along the road.)

Ethel: "Of course I won't forget—but how many things we learn that we never have any use for! The mind has room for all sorts of odds and ends—Oh, there they are, on the platform—and they're waving. Oh, your train is in—look there——"

Reginald: "Yes, I see. (Desperately) Ethel, I love you so—I adore you—I could die for you this minute."

Ethel: "Oh, how can you say such things? And they're frantic for you to hurry. *Please* run."

Reginald: "You believe it, don't you, don't you *dear!*"

Ethel: "Oh, you'll miss your train! They'll blame me for it. *Do* hurry!"

Reginald: "But you must tell me—if I may hope? I beg of you, Ethel. Say you care——"

Ethel: "Oh, good-bye, and run for pity's sake. Run, run!"

Reginald (wildly): "Answer quick. Yes—or no?"

Ethel (also wildly): "No! No—I mean, I can't answer—there isn't time!"

Reginald (straightening himself up with sudden manliness): "Very well, Ethel. I understand. Yes, it is a little word. There would be time to say it—if you *cared!* Good-bye—God bless you!" (Rushes from her and enters the train. Ethel hurries forward, as near as possible to the line of windows. As the train moves off their eyes meet. Ethel spells plainly in deaf and dumb show an emphatic "YES!" Reginald kisses his hand in a wordless rapture of recognition and gratitude as the train recedes.)

Ethel (pensively retracing her steps along the quiet country road): "And to think of the important uses we can make of useless knowledge. If Reginald had not taught me that silly alphabet, what could *I have* done? I'd rather die than say 'Yes' in a hurry, even to the dearest fellow in the world; but somehow I didn't mind *spelling* it—a bit."

Madeline Bridges.

A TEN-POUND PRIZE.

(See Next Page.)

On the next page is a puzzle picture composed of 88 squares. If these squares be rearranged in a certain order they will form a real picture.

We offer a prize of £10 to the first person who sends the correct solution. In order to give readers in all parts of the United Kingdom as equal a chance as possible, none of the solutions received will be opened until Thursday, April 16th, when all those received will be considered together. In the event of two or more correct solutions being included in one day's post, the prize will be given to the sender of the *neatest* one. Consolation Prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor.

If no correct solution be received on or before Tuesday, April 21st, 1896, the Ten-Pound Prize will be given to the sender of the solution then to hand which is most nearly correct.

Pictures should be packed flat or folded, not rolled, and the outside wrapper must be marked "May."

N.B.—To make the puzzle more difficult some of the squares have been turned upside down.

Key to the last Picture Puzzle and names of winners will be found on page 320.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

By Winifred Graham. *Author of "Through the Valley," "Six First-Class Passengers," etc.*

CHAPTER XIX.

Let us be Open as the Day.

Eleanor notices after that night Carol becomes nervous and irritable.

His absences are more frequent, but wherever he goes he takes the dog with him for protection.

Though only a rough-haired terrier, it seems to guard him; yet the constant recurrence of apparently reasonless growls and barks startles and annoys him.

Eleanor often sits with Elizabeth Kachin when Quinton is out, and wonders what she would do without the companionship of this one white woman.

That day she is walking up the hill towards her friend's hut, when she meets young Tombo, who rushes up and seizes her skirts.

"Oh, do come!" he cries, dragging her along; "something awful bad is going on at home. There is a stranger at our door crying just dreadful; and mother's red in the face, sayin' no end of angry words, stampin', fumin', and wringing her hands. The stranger wanted to see me and speak; but mother just hustled me out at the back, and tells me to go and play beans in the jungle. But the boys are not there. Quartey M'Ba is takin' care of his father, who's dead drunk with Zoo, and little Rangusaw Mymoodelayer is workin' with his uncle. It's sure to be all right if *you* come, Mrs. Quinton. Mother 'll calm down when she sees who I've brought."

He runs eagerly before her, while Eleanor, utterly at a loss to comprehend the nature of the trouble, approaches Elizabeth's homestead in some trepidation.

"I'll have none of you," Mrs. Kachin's hard voice is heard exclaiming. "Did I not write it plain in black and white? Didn't I repeat it three times over on the same page, twice underlined? Am I not old enough to judge for myself, to know my own will? Begone, or I'll tell you some home truths which were best not uttered from my lips."

"Oh, little Beth, little Beth!" moans a pleading voice, "the child I nursed and loved. Can it be you that speaks so hard, that turns me from the door? Let me see the child before I go—the sturdy dark boy who was born to you. Beth, have some pity, some mercy on my misery! It has cost me nearly my little all to come out to you, for I thought your heart would soften when you saw your mother's face."

She breaks off into bitter sobbing and sinks on the step.

Eleanor stands like one paralysed listening to the quarrel, while Tombo hides behind her skirts, clinging to her fearfully.

Her face flushes with shame for Elizabeth, and pity for this stricken woman. Her eyes flash scorn on Mrs. Kachin, as she turns and raises the stranger from her attitude of humility and degradation.

"Your daughter's virtue and pride are things to be despised, accursed," she says, "when bound in such an armour of harshness and cruelty."

The weeping woman lifts her head, and her eyes meet Eleanor's.

The two start involuntarily. The scene of a railway carriage rushes suddenly before their vision, the fragments of a torn photograph, the name on the label of Eleanor's dressing-bag.

"Mrs. Roche!" gasps the stranger.

That word here! It stuns, petrifies her. The very sound of it is as a blow.

A flock of four or five horn-bills fly above their heads, making their noises like an express train through the air. As they fade from sight Eleanor fancies the train has stopped at the little platform of Copthorne.

The shrill cry of the jungle fowl, crowing like bantams on the old farmland at home, seem to repeat the word, "*Roche, Roche!*"

"What can I do?" asks the woman wildly, grasping Eleanor's arm. "I am here, and Beth has cast me out, I have nowhere to lay my head."

"Come with me," says Eleanor slowly, deliberately, looking from the faded features of the withered woman to Mrs. Kachin's contracted mouth. "I will give you rest and shelter."

"You will regret it if you take her under your roof!" cries Elizabeth, slamming the door.

"May the good Samaritans of this world do the same for you, Mrs. Roche, when you are in trouble," says the weary wanderer, as Eleanor leads her faltering footsteps down the hill.

She is too excited by the strange coincidence of this, their second meeting, to wonder whether she is binding a burden on her back, or offering a refuge thoughtlessly without consulting Carol. She only looks pityingly at the towzled hair and drawn face of her guest, pressing her hand sympathetically as they enter the verandah together. "I am not Mrs. Roche here," falters Eleanor, "you must call me Mrs. Quinton."

The woman looks searchingly, sadly, into Eleanor's eyes.

"I see," she answers slowly.

"And your name?" asks Eleanor.

"Palfrey Blum. I am Mrs. Blum."

What an odd introduction, what a puzzling fate.

Digitized by Google

Carol is deeply annoyed at his return to discover the guest.

"What on earth you want to bring that hideous creature with a head of hay here for I can't imagine," he exclaims. "You must shunt her as soon as possible, Eleanor, I can't have you picking up waifs and strays, and turning our home into a sort of infirmary."

"I don't know what to do, it is a most pitiable story."

"Oh! dash the story!" interpolates Carol. "I shouldn't mind if she were not so confoundedly ugly."

"I could not help it, darling," says Eleanor tearfully. "I did not think you would object."

"Well, now she is here, what are you going to do with her?"

"I don't know."

Carol stalks up and down the room with his hands in his pockets.

Eleanor's spirits sink.

"I will see what I can do, dearest," she says at last.

Carol turns, seeing her beautiful eyes moist and sorrowful.

He gathers her into his arms and kisses her suddenly.

"Get rid of the old ghost," he whispers. "I can't endure to see a relic of faded beauty standing decayed before my eyes. A woman has no right to grow old, it is an unpardonable offence, and takes away one's appetite having to look at her at meals."

"How unchristian you are, Carol!" she says, smiling under his caress.

The following morning Mrs. Blum seems refreshed, and looks less careworn after her night's sleep.

"There is one thing I desire more than all else on earth," she confides to Eleanor, "and that is to hold my grandson in my arms, to kiss him once."

"I have been again to Elizabeth, but she will not listen to me. Perhaps I might get the boy to you without her knowledge, or big Tombo may possibly bring him. There were tears in his eyes to-day when I was pleading with Elizabeth."

"Ah! Big Tombo is not so bitter against me as his wife. He is a good man, and charitable."

So Eleanor watches for Mr. Kachin to pass down the path to the valley below, where the rice is cultivated.

When she sees him she runs out. He stops and bows. Eleanor gives him her hand.

"Ah, Mrs. Quinton," he says, "we are deeply indebted to you for your kindness to poor Mrs. Blum. Even my wife in her righteous indignation owns that. I should personally be very glad to do anything I could for her, only Elizabeth is so determined. Can you advise me?"

Eleanor thinks a moment.

"She must be sent back again, I suppose. She regrets bitterly having come."

"Has she any money?"

"Oh, yes, but hardly enough to take her home; she relied on living with you and Elizabeth. I shall help her all I can, and perhaps you will also."

Big Tombo works hard, and he has a good store of hoardings laid by. He is an intensely generous man, and but for his wife's watchfulness would give away all that he has to others.

Eleanor inspires him to make an offer.

"I will pay her fare to England," he says. "It will save Elizabeth the pain of coming in contact with her. After all, she is my mother-in-law. It is the least that I can do."

"You are most good and kind," replies Eleanor, "and she would be deeply grateful if you came in now and told her this yourself. She feels her daughter's slight acutely."

Big Tombo bows assent.

The beautiful Mrs. Quinton's word is law.

Mrs. Blum trembles with emotion as her eyes fall upon him. She listens to what he says with tears in her eyes and a blessing in her heart.

"You are a good son," she says, taking his great brown hands between her withered palms, and pressing them to her lips. "I love you for your care of Elizabeth—for the happy home in which she lives. When she speaks of me harshly tell her to think of me as one dead. We reverence the names of those who are underground, even though we despise them during their lives. I shall never forget what you have done for me."

Her voice is choked with emotion.

"If—if you don't mind," she falters, "I should like to look once on your child before I go."

Tombo bends his head. He has not the heart to refuse her.

That afternoon he sends the boy, without Elizabeth's knowledge, to carry some bananas to Eleanor.

"Come in, my dear," she says kindly, as the little boy presents the fruit. "There is a lady who wishes to see you."

She takes his small hand and leads him into the room.

Mrs. Blum rushes forward with a cry, and flinging her arms round the child's neck, kisses him again and again.

Then perching him on her knee, she looks at him intently, murmuring: "Beth's boy! Beth's son!"

"You are the lady who got scolded," says Tombo gravely. "Why was my mother so angry with you?"

"It is not polite to ask questions," puts in Eleanor hastily.

"But she ought not to be cross," continues Tombo, "because you must be good, you're white, like Mrs. Quinton, and mother never rows her. Who are you?" placing his tiny fingers against her cheek, and stroking it gently.

"I am your granny, dear, and you will never see me again. But you must think of me sometimes, and remember that I loved you."

She strains him to her heart passionately.

"You're crying!" says Tombo. "That's naughty. Oh! don't cry," shaking her in a sudden frenzy of fear. "Granny, Granny!"

Children always dread to see their elders give way to any emotion, and the little fellow's terror brings back Mrs. Blum's composure.

"There, darling, see, I am smiling," she says, her faded eyes lighting up through a mist of tears.

"I think it is very nice to have a Granny, and I want to keep her always."

"That is impossible, dearest. You must be a good boy, and not ask mother questions."

Eleanor brings him sweets and cakes, which he readily devours, sharing them with the dog, who jumps up, startling Mrs. Blum, on whose knees young Tombo is seated.

"You must trot home soon," says Eleanor, glancing nervously at the time, and fearing every moment lest Elizabeth should sweep in like a tragedy queen, and snatch her offspring from Mrs. Blum's arms.

"Yes, soon," sighs his grandmother, holding him as if she will never let him go. She detaches a small gold locket from her chain, in which is a lock of Elizabeth's hair.

"You may keep this, darling," she murmurs, "to remember Granny by."

She looks tenderly at the pale, flaxen lock of hair, which grew on little Beth's baby forehead.

"Don't lose it, Tombo, for it is very precious—one of Granny's dearest treasures. Mother will recognise it and know the hair inside. Tell her you must keep it always, because she played with it as a little girl."

The boy gazes in awe at the locket.

"Didn't it cost a lot of money?" he asks.

Mrs. Blum smiles at the remark.

"You are an odd child," she says, placing him on the ground.

"Have you nothing you can give Granny?" whispers Eleanor in his ear.

Tombo draws a small whistle from his pocket and carries it with an air of triumph to Mrs. Blum.

Digitized by Google

"This is for you, Granny. It is all my own, so don't be afraid. Quartey M'Ba gave it to me for a dead 'minah' I found in the jungle."

She takes the little whistle tremblingly.

"Granny will wear it on her chain," she says, "in the place of her locket; she will keep it quite as carefully."

Then she kisses the child, and pushes him from her, covering her face with her hands that she may not see him go.

Eleanor leads Tombo away, and watches him run down the hill—he is clasping the gold locket safely in both hands.

* * * * * *

Mrs. Blum has departed blessing Eleanor, and pouring such overwhelming gratitude into her ears that solitude is a welcome relief.

"Poor soul," she thinks. "Shall I ever come to *that?*"

A step is heard on the verandah, the rustle of a dress, and Elizabeth Kachin stands before her.

She is paler than of yore, her eyes a trifle softer. The hard lips part in greeting; she takes Eleanor by both hands.

"You are a good woman," she says, with an admiring glance. "I cannot tell you how high your great charity has placed you in my esteem and regard. To think you actually laid aside all your natural feelings of repulsion and harboured such a woman out of charity."

"Merely an act of plain humanity," replies Eleanor.

"Nevertheless, I could not do it, even to my own mother. To be in contact with what is sinful is abhorrent to me. Still, I am not blind to your great kindness and self-sacrifice. Tombo and I both wish to thank you."

Eleanor's heart swells at the words—to be thought good, noble, charitable. What a blessed thing it is! She realises how deeply she still values public opinion, which she has cast to the winds in her reckless love for Carol. Elizabeth, by her words of praise, endears herself to Eleanor, in spite of her late behaviour to the poor outcast. It is well to be looked up to and to be believed in. Then the galling thought creeps into her elated brain:

"You have no right to this approbation. Elizabeth is a just woman, clothed in that pitiless virtue which tramples down the weak. You are deceiving her and accepting what is not your due. You may be foolish, wild, mistaken, Eleanor; you may have ruined your husband and yourself; but you are *not* a hypocrite."

She realises in a moment all it will cost her to lose her friend's respect, to see the look of scorn in Elizabeth's eye, and watch her turn away as from one polluted.

For the moment it seems too hard, but Eleanor pulls herself together and sets her teeth.

She walks across to the door with a steady step, her slim young figure drawn up to its full height, her head tossed back, her cheeks aflame.

Elizabeth watches in mute surprise. Then Eleanor breaks the silence, flings open the door, and cries with outstretched hand pointing to the hill:

"*Go!* I, too, am a wicked woman!"

CHAPTER XX.

The ideal! Dim vanities of dreams by night.

From the moment those fatal words were uttered: "Go! I, too, am a wicked woman!" the scales fall from Elizabeth's eyes.

How natural it seems to her now, the so-called Mrs. Quinton's act of sympathy.

But what she does not know, nor can ever guess, is the supreme effort that confession costs Eleanor. It is wrung from her lips through sheer force of will, and as Mrs. Kachin obeys the command, and with head held proudly aloft, passes out into the blinding sunlight, Eleanor receives her first slight since leaving England.

The cup is bitter, it takes away her breath. She stands in the doorway gasping, blinded by the glaring light of day. A victim at the shrine of truth, self condemned, self accused.

It is thus that Carol finds her, gazing tragically at the departing figure of Elizabeth Kachin.

"What's up?" he asks, seeing her distress.

"I have told Elizabeth," she says slowly, "what I am."

Quinton bites his lip with annoyance.

"I should not have thought even you could have committed such an egregious act of folly!"

"I could not help myself. Elizabeth thought me so good, so different, and her words seared my conscience. Ah! you smile, no wonder. It ought to be dead by rights, long ago."

"You poor little thing," he says more tenderly. "But it was very silly, and another time do not let a few miserable scruples overrule your better judgment. After all, Elizabeth is no great loss, but it is always unwise and unnecessary to give yourself away. There! I have done my lecture, come and kiss me."

She flies into his arms.

"It is terrible when you are annoyed with me, Carol. I should like you to think everything I do or say perfection. But then we cannot have all we want in life, and especially such a delightful life as ours. Do you know, however deeply you love, however constant you may prove, you can never realise your ideal. It exists alone in the realms of fancy; it is as unsubstantial as a dream—in fact, it *is* a dream!"

"Have I disappointed you then?" he asks, with a wounded look.

"Oh, no," raising her eyebrows at the bare idea. "I meant it just the other way—that I have failed to please you in everything. An ideal has no fault, and I appear full of errors. An ideal is something good, holy, perfect. I am bad, unreasonable, foolish."

"You certainly have a way of making a fellow feel a cur without meaning it."

"Have I?" says Eleanor simply.

"Do you ever long to be back in London?" asks Quinton suddenly.

"No—a thousand times no! It is a city of destruction a hell of iniquity, Satan and the Savoy, his satellites Giddy Mounteagle, and——"

"*Me!*"

"Carol," with deep reproach in her tone, "though my life here with you is one which the 'Elizabeths' of Society shun and condemn, I believe in the peaceful atmosphere, the blessed quiet, and sweet unfretful days, I have been a better woman. When I think of the daily quarrels in Richmond, the frivolous worldly conversations of Giddy and her set, it soothes all suspicion of regret in my heart. Love is my only law, and that is described as chief among virtues."

"Then you are happy. I have brought some solace and light into your days, Eleanor? If I died to-morrow, or was lost from sight, you would look back and say: 'He gave me my dearest hours, my most treasured memories. He brought me from the slough of despond to the sunshine of the east.'"

"Yes," she murmurs, quoting her favourite song:

"If you've heard the East a-callin',
You won't never 'eed naught else."

She snatches up her guitar with the light laugh of a girl.

"No, you won't 'eed nothin' else, but them spicy garlic smells,
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees, an' the tinkly temple bells."

"Come out for a ride," says Carol, "now it is cooler."

Eleanor's face brightens, her eyes glow. He goes so frequently alone, never even telling her the direction he has taken, and answering shortly when questioned. His suggestion meets with her highest approval.

"We will go by the jungle," she says. "You know my favourite road; not past Elizabeth's hut, since her doors will be closed to me henceforth. I shall miss her friendship

Digitized by Google

when I am alone, but you must not leave me so often now, and we will ask that nice Major Short and Captain Stevenson to come and see us again."

"So you *are* fond of society still," says Quinton smiling, "though you denied it just now."

"Two congenial spirits are not 'society,'" she replies. "That word comprises people in a bulk. But here are the horses. Doesn't Braye du Valle look splendid? I hope if I died you would let him drag me to my grave."

"Don't be gruesome," says Carol.

"Oh! we *must* take the dog. Where is he? Do go and find him, dear."

"He is such a bothering little beast, we shall be better without him," protests Quinton. "Yesterday he nearly frightened my horse over a precipice, flying into the bushes and fighting with some wild animal. I don't know what it was, but he came out bitten and bleeding. He limped home, leaving a track behind him. Something big rushed away, I shot at it but did not hit it. I don't know how the dog escaped with his life."

"But he is all right to-day, and I want to take him, he is always so busy and amusing," Eleanor persists. "Besides, such a plucky little beggar ought not to be coddled. I think you will find him in my room."

Quinton goes unwillingly. The dog and its vagaries have got on his nerves, though he does not care to own it.

As Eleanor is waiting without she hears the sound of a horse behind, and, turning quickly, is surprised to see a stranger riding up the hill. A tall, handsome woman, well developed, with portly shoulders and large hands. She is riding an immense charger, and whistling gaily. At a second glance Eleanor sees that this masculine young woman is strikingly attractive, her style distinctly original, her figure, though large, splendidly proportioned. She has shiningly white teeth under her curling lips—full, red, and smiling. Her eyes are large, dark, and brilliant, flashing like twin stars under a level brow, with black, almost bushy, eyebrows.

Her complexion is rich and clear, her hair braided in masses under a man's hat. A gun slung over her shoulder gives her a sporting appearance.

She looks curiously at Eleanor's fragile beauty—the contrast between them is marked.

The whistle dies on the stranger's lips, she sets her mouth, averts her head, lashes her steed, and gallops by—never halting till out of sight of the slim woman on Braye du Valle.

"I wonder who she can be?" thinks Eleanor, watching the departing figure so intently that she never notices Carol return with the dog till he speaks:

"What are you looking at?"

His eyes follow the direction of her gaze, but discern only a cloud of dust in the distance.

"A stranger," cries Eleanor excitingly, "a white woman riding alone."

"Really! What was she like?"

"Big, and bold, and handsome. The sort of 'knock you down' woman who balances weights at music-halls in tights. Giddy and Bertie took me once to a box at the Empire; she reminded me of the strong lady in spangles. A magnificent creature, like a splendid animal."

"Oh!" ejaculates Quinton.

"Couldn't you find out who she is, Carol, I would love to know? She gave me such an odd look from her great brave eyes, then, to my astonishment, galloped madly away as if I were going to eat her. She was armed, too, so need not have been afraid, though I don't look much like a savage, do I?"

"I can't see that we need trouble about her."

"She raised my curiosity."

"Simply because of her good looks."

"She was the strangest woman I ever saw. I should like to know more of her."

Quinton jags his horse's mouth angrily, and, calling the dog, rides forward to stop the discussion.

"He has no thought for any woman but me," mentally ejaculates Eleanor, as she follows on Braye du Valle.

She is perfectly satisfied with her lot as she rides beside him, gazing at his handsome profile.

Some sombre-hued birds on the ground fly into the air as they approach. The transformation from dark feathers to brilliant yellow plumage as they spread their wings in flight is pleasing to the eye.

"I love the golden oriole," says Eleanor; "they look like a flash of sunlight. The Eastern birds are very beautiful."

As she speaks there is a low growl from behind.

Simultaneously Eleanor and Carol turn in their saddles, looking sharply at the dog, and then to the thick growth towards which he is stealing, his tail between his legs and his head down.

"I believe that dog is cracked," says Eleanor, calling him back sharply. "I always feel as if some evil spirit were near us when he behaves like that."

"I told you how it would be if we brought him."

"Let us see what he will do."

The dog has taken no heed of her call, but crouches nearer the bushes, bristling all over. Then suddenly he makes a dive into their midst, disappearing from view.

This is followed by a series of shrill barks—the sound as of a dog fighting for its life—a skirmish—a hideous yell—and then—silence.

"Something has killed him!" whispers Eleanor under her breath.

"We had better get on," replies Quinton, "it may be some dangerous beast."

"What! ride off, and perhaps leave the wretched dog mangled and maimed to crawl away and starve? Carol! what are you thinking of?"

She springs to the ground, flings him her reins, and before he realises what she is going to do, rushed into the bushes after her pet.

"Eleanor, are you *mad?*" he thunders, already picturing her devoured by some fierce beast.

It is a moment of horrible suspense. When she emerges, her face scratched by the low boughs, bearing tenderly the limp body of the terrier, torn and bleeding.

"He is quite dead," she says sorrowfully, tears standing in her eyes. "I can see the marks of teeth on his throat."

"Poor little beggar! Do you know you too might be dead at this moment for the sake of recovering the lifeless body of a dog? You must be off your head, Eleanor, to do such an utterly insane thing. Whatever were you thinking of?"

"I was excited—my blood was up. I am like that," she answers apologetically.

They ride silently home.

"We shall miss him," sighs Eleanor at last.

"Who? The dog?"

"Yes. We must let Captain Stevenson know."

"I wonder what animal killed him?"

"I saw nothing, only I fancy I heard a rustle in the trees to my right, and the sound of a horse's hoofs scampering towards the jungle. It may have been only imagination, or perhaps the stalwart lady with the fine eyes was hovering near us."

Quinton's face blanches. He turns to her sharply:

"If you *did* imagine it, I wish you would not romance."

Eleanor is sorry she has told him, since he appears anxious and uncomfortable. He has never been quite the same since his wrestle with the masked man. He is easily startled and alarmed. She blames herself inwardly for want of discretion, and reassures him with a smile.

"Oh! it was nothing, dearest; if anyone had been riding I must have seen him—I mean—her."

Eleanor knows this is not the case, but seeing Carol's relief at the words, does not regret them.

"We must expect adventures now and again," she continues cheerfully, trying to throw off her depression.

"I shall never forget that night," says Carol, "when I

Digitized by Google

rode away from you in the dark. I *did* wish I was on Charing Cross Station."

"It was too bad of me; I might have had the sense not to pursue you, sheer idiotcy on my part."

"Has it ever struck you, Eleanor, to wonder how long we shall go on living in this out-of-the way hole?"

She catches her breath.

"No, Carol. I am quite contented to be here, though I suppose in time you will weary of the place, and we shall move elsewhere. Yours is rather a roving spirit, I fear, never happy for long in one spot. I feel rooted to this restful retreat, but directly you tire of it, only say the word, and I will follow you to the end of the world. We have our home here, and there is plenty of sport for you, so I expect we shall jog along for a while!" with a feeble attempt at a laugh. Any signs of discontent on Carol's part fill her with vague dread and suspense.

"Would it not seem strange," he continues, "to go back to England and be respectable? Imagine yourself in a prim little village, posing as a good young widow, playing Lady Bountiful to the poor, and being called on by the county magnates, while I lived a virtuous bachelor life in the dreary precincts of Clifford's Inn."

"Apart! *Us* apart!" gasps Eleanor.

"My love, I was only 'supposing.' But isn't the idea ludicrous, quite too funny and absurd? *You* romanced first, I am only following your lead. I have heard respectability termed 'the curse of pleasure.' It kills enjoyment, breeds hypocrisy, fosters discontent, revolutionises Bohemia!"

Eleanor dislikes his flippancy. The picture he has drawn bewilders her. The thought of life without Carol is hideous, impossible. Her usual spirits flag.

"Why are you so dull and down, darling?"

"You make me so!"

"It seems, Eleanor, you can never take a joke."

All the glamour of her present happiness has faded under the saddening influence of Carol's "joke!" But she will not own it is that which distresses her.

"I do not see an animal I know and care for bitten to death every day, and that poor little dog was so attached to me. I wish I had given him the extra biscuit he begged for this morning. I told him he was greedy, and hid it away."

She goes sadly into the house and dresses for dinner in a dainty robe of white muslin cut low at the neck, for Quinton's benefit.

The sudden necessity for looking beautiful, and making herself pleasant and fascinating, comes over her like a nightmare. Her throat is parched. Her temples burn.

The gown is soft and clinging, the effect fairylike and picturesque. Quinton never sees her in this simple garb without an exclamation of approval.

She creeps behind him in the verandah, twining her bare arms round his neck.

He looks at her admiringly, as he would at a picture which gladdens the eye for a moment.

"How late it is," she whispers, kneeling beside him. "Cook is frantic, for all our dinner is spoiled; we were out a long while."

Quamina, who only talks a smattering of English, rushes into the verandah, wringing her hands. Her black lips tremble, her eyes start from her head.

"Oh! Sahib! Sahib!" she cries, "the big black devil that tracks the Sahib, he rode up the hill, *there!*" pointing with outstretched fingers.

Quinton starts to his feet.

"Where?" he asks, looking out but seeing nothing. "What do you mean?"

But Quamina continues to shake and cry, moaning: "The devil, he has come for the Sahib!"

(To be continued.)

RESULT of PICTURE PUZZLE.

The Puzzle Picture Competition, announced in Short Stories, dated March 14th, has been very successful. All those attempts received up till March 12th were examined together, and the neatest of those correct was sent in by Mr. W. T. Wilson, 84, Warner Road, St. James's Street, Walthamstow, to whom a cheque for £10 has been forwarded. The fifty competitors whose names are appended sent in correct solutions, and have each been awarded a gold plated pencil-case for the neatness of their attempts.

J. E. Miller, 18, Melford Street, Barry, near Cardiff; W. H. Power, 67, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.; Miss B. Perrett, 4, The Cedars, Clapham Common; S. E. Burt, 1, Springfield Gardens, Upper Clapton; G. W. Banks, Wright's Row, Walkington, Surrey; S. E. Webb, 126, Ashford Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent; Miss S. J. Booth, 24, George Street, Bolton, Lancashire; R. Thomson, 20, Glen Street, Edinburgh; M. F. Gandy, 59, Langley Road, Luton; Mrs. W. Unwin, 13, Cathcart Street, Hall Park, Paddington; Mrs. M. de Mattos, Steamshall, Highgate; Miss E. Blogg, Marsh House, Newbury, Bucks.; W. Richardson, 42, East Road, Egremont, *via* Carnforth; Miss A. Greenwood, 80, Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester; J. Coulter, 38, Balfour Street, Leith Walk, Edinburgh; P. L. Goddard, 1, Lenobia Mansions, Queen's Club Gardens, North Kensington; George Thomson, 20, Glen Street, Edinburgh; G. T. Somerville, 17A, Great George Street, Westminster; O. L. Lacour, 2, Chester Villas, Bridgeman Road, Teddington; T. Bonell, Pengwern, Glynfield Road, Harlesden; Mrs. Calder, 9, Bowhill Terrace, Goldenacre, Edinburgh; J. Thornton, 79, Dashwood Road, Stewart's Road; W. C. Houghton, 75, Highbury Quadrant, N.; Mrs. Le Hedchins, 27, Ecclesbourne Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey; H. Powell, Southill Park, Biggleswade, Beds.; A. E. Bowles, 35, Weston Street, Bradford; C. Walters, 2, Frederick Place, Hereson Road, Ramsgate; W. Gill, 78, Salisbury Road, Cathays, Cardiff; Miss B. C. Smythe, St. Ann's House, Lewes; Miss M. Harney, 15, Lorwayne Road, St. John's Hill, S.W.; F. B. Herring, 20, Birchin Lane, Cornhill; A. Laing, 212, Queen's Road, Dalston; A. Hook, 9, Canterbury Place, Lambeth Road, S.E.; Mrs. E. Smith, The Rectory, Carr Hill, Gateshead; Professor Michael, 48, High Street, Ramsgate; Miss C. M. V. Morris, St. Clare's Cottage, Paulsaph, near Holywell, N. Wales; J. Wallace, Garrick Club, 132, Prince's Street, Edinburgh; G. D. Strachan, 39, Clifton Place, Shipley Yorks; G. K. Stubbs, 29, Park Street, Macclesfield; T. Somers, 39, Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, W.C.; W. J. Young, Beetham, Milnthorpe, Westmoreland; F. J. Gill, 49, King William Street, London Bridge; J. W. Lewis, Oswald Road, Oswestry, Salop; H. Jones, 74, Victoria Dock Road, E.; W. C. Sellin, 196, Cheltenham Road, Bristol; W. Robinson, 3, Landseer Street, Battersea Park Road; H. J. Payne, 9, Eastbourne Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire; Mrs. F. T. Townsend, Thirlwell Mount, Sheffield; Mrs. Doherty, 12, Moss Street, Garston, near Liverpool.

Here is the key:

37	48	26	8	15	33	46	17
81	66	51	31	22	71	57	4
13	54	63	69	42	19	6	73
35	2	67	24	9	39	45	59
20	30	27	87	83	50	85	76
88	16	43	86	65	79	61	7
53	55	78	1	10	52	23	18
64	38	74	11	56	84	34	12
58	40	28	47	72	3	21	29
25	70	82	60	75	62	80	44
5	32	77	98	68	14	69	41

POSTAL RATES.

Short Stories will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 9d.

Printed and Published by C. Arthur Pearson, at "Pearson's Weekly" Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

SEWING MACHINES.

A £3 3s. Lockstitch Machine for £1 1s.

SPECIAL SALE FOR 21 DAYS.

How is it done? By buying in immense quantities for cash. By selling in immense quantities. By getting recommendations from everyone. How many Machines does an ordinary shop keep or sell in a week? Perhaps three or four. How many do we sell **in a day? In one day alone** we sold **2,700**; and we have got the orders and will prove it to anyone. There is an enormous profit on Sewing Machines. There must be. A man cannot keep a shop and give credit, take monthly instalments and risk, unless there is. Owing to the enormous quantity we buy we get Machines for next to nothing, and if we can sell on an average 500 Machines a day at 1/- each profit, it pays us. You can go to a shop and pay £3 3s. for a Machine, or you can come to us and get one just as good for 21/-. Come and see them and prove it for yourselves, or send for one of our lists and read the hundreds of testimonials sent to us. No one can do what we are doing. Your neighbours will tell you it is impossible. Well, write to any of the hundreds of customers we give the names and addresses of. Don't take our word for it. Prove it true or false. We offer for the next 21 days to send to anyone who cuts out the coupon below and sends it to us with 21/- one of our SUPERB FAMILY LOCKSTITCH SEWING MACHINES, very best quality and fully guaranteed, with best boat-shaped shuttle, patent winder, stop feed, large fly-wheel on handsome stand. These Machines can be used either by hand or treadle. Every Machine tested and sent out packed free of charge for 21/-. Can you get such an offer anywhere else? No. Don't miss this grand opportunity, which is only offered for 21 days, during our Special Sale. No reduction on quantity, as we do not see more than 1/- clear profit on each Machine. Extra Needles, 1/- dozen; extra Spools, 3 for 6d.; Can of Special Oil, 6d.; extra Cotton, 1/- dozen reels. Remember what we offer. A full-size Family Lockstitch Sewing Machine, perfect and packed free of charge for 21/- if ordered within 21 days. Coupon as below to be cut out and sent with order. Don't buy a Machine anywhere else till you have see our list. Specimen of work, full particulars, and testimonials sent on receipt of 1d. for postage.

THEOBALD'S SPECIAL SALE COUPON.

SHORT STORIES.

This Coupon entitles holder to One Machine as above for 21/-.

(Signed) J. THEOBALD & Co.

MESSRS. J. THEOBALD & CO.,

Wholesale Manufacturers,

19, Farringdon Road, LONDON, E.C.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

TO THE DEAF.

A Gentleman who cured himself of Deafness and Noises in the Head after fourteen years' suffering, will gladly send full particulars of the remedy post free.—Address, H. CLIFTON, Amberley House, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C.

HAVE YOU A POST CARD?

If not, please obtain one, and send it to

THE PEARSON POTTERY CO., HANLEY,

with your name and address on the back, and you will receive by next post full particulars of the most wonderful package of crockery the world has ever seen.

100 PIECES FOR £1 1s.

100 PIECES FOR £1 1s.

A Dinner Service of 50 pieces is included, which is guaranteed to be worth the guinea alone, and a China Tea Service of 28 pieces, finished in gold, together with a lot of useful kitchen crockery.

The Secret of the Success.—The Pearson Pottery Company are manufacturers, not middlemen, like many other advertisers. The Pearson Potteries have nearly 2,000ft. frontage to the town of Hanley.

Thousands sold all over the world. Everybody not only satisfied, but amazed at the quantity and quality given.

Hundreds of these packages are applied for as **Wedding or Birthday Presents.** And what more useful present can be given? Every item is useful.

Post Cards and Letters to be addressed to the

PEARSON POTTERY COMPANY, HANLEY.

Digitized by Google

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Where does strength come from? Where does energy come from? The word "strength" is derived from the Saxon, the word "energy" from the Greek. But that isn't the main point. It is not words we want to talk about now, it is the thing itself. We all know what we mean by it. Where does it come from? What makes it? Let us try to get at that. Right under my hand are two letters, with fifty more within reach, all complaining of a want of strength and energy. Why, what's coming to ail people? Was this the form things were in when England was some generations younger?

"I felt," says one, "no life or energy for anything. This was in July, 1892. I was below par and wasting away. My appetite was poor, and I had a loathing and disgust for food of every sort. No matter how simple the meal was, I had heaviness and pain in the chest after eating it. With this was pain at the pit of the stomach, which nothing that I took relieved. My hands and feet were cold and clammy; the blood in my veins seemed to have no heat in it.

"Then I began to lose flesh rapidly, and got so weak I could hardly walk. One day in May, 1893, whilst visiting a relative at Everton, I vomited over a pint of blackish blood. In great alarm I saw a doctor, who said it was an accumulation of blood in the stomach. In this condition I remained until February last, when I read in the *Gymraig*, a Welsh newspaper, about the efficacy of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup in cases like mine. I got the medicine from Mr. Williams, chemist, Westminster Road, and after taking it a few days was greatly relieved. I felt like eating, and what I ate sat upon my stomach easily. It digested, and gave me no trouble or distress. I can now eat anything, and am well and strong as ever. (Signed) R. M. Davies, 31, St. Hilda Street, Westminster Road, Liverpool, July 25th, 1894."

Here is the second letter. "In the early part of 1884," it runs, "I was so heavy, languid, and weak that I couldn't imagine what ailed me. My mouth tasted bad. I was often sick, vomiting a dark, bitter fluid, and my teeth and gums were covered with phlegm, so thick it nearly choked me. I couldn't eat, and my stomach was puffed and swollen, and there was a horrible gnawing pain in it. My kidneys troubled me, too, and I had difficulty in voiding the secretion from them. Sometimes the pain low down in my back was so cruel I couldn't straighten myself out. I dared not eat. I loathed the very sight of food, and for days together I never took a bite. I got so weak I could scarcely stand, and so thin that my clothes ceased to fit me—they merely hung on me.

"I took all sorts of drugs and had medical treatment without benefit.

"In March, 1889, after having suffered five years, a book was left at my shop telling about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I had no faith in advertised medicines, but I got a bottle at Mr. Thompson's Drug Stores, Manchester Road, and after taking it a few days my appetite revived, and my food agreed with me. I kept on taking it, and soon all symptoms of disease left me, and I got back my strength. I will answer any inquiries about my case. (Signed) R. Adams, 24, West Street, Oldham, Lancs., September 11th, 1894."

What ailed these men on their own showing? What ails millions more, whether they understand it or not? Indigestion, dyspepsia, and the ailments that grow out of it—that and nothing else. Hence weakness, loss of strength and energy, of course. For where does strength come from? It comes from digested food. And what enables one to digest his food? Mother Seigel's Syrup. A host of witnesses testify to that. So you have the question and the right answer.

Digitized by Google